

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1880.

White Wings : A Hatching Romance.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CONFESSION.



W HAT could the solitary scouts, coming back from the various points of the island, know of this quick, unwilling cry of pain, and of the forced calm that followed it? They had their own sorrows. There was a gloom upon their faces. One and all bore the same story—not a seal, not a wild duck, not even a rock pigeon anywhere.

“But it is a fine thing to be able to straighten one’s back,” says the Laird, who always seizes on the cheerful side; “and we have not given up hope of

your getting the sealskin yet, Miss Mary—no, no. The Doctor says they are away hunting just now; when the tide gets low again they will come up on the rocks. So the best thing we can do is to spend plenty of time over our luncheon, and cross the island again in the after-

noon. Aye; begun already?" adds the Laird, as he goes up to the canvas, and regards the rough outlines in charcoal with a critical air. "Very good! very good!" he says, following the lines with his thumb, and apparently drawing in the air. "Excellent! The composition very clever indeed—simple, bold, striking. And a fine blaze of colour ye'll have on a day like this; and then the heavy black hull of the smack bang in the foreground: excellent, excellent! But if I were you, I would leave out that rock there; ye would get a better sweep of the sea. Don't distract the eye in sea pieces; bold lines—firm, sound colour: and there ye are. Well, my lass, ye have the skill of constructing a picture. Tom Galbraith himself would admit that, I know——"

But here the Laird is called away by his hostess.

"I would advise you, sir," says she, "to have some luncheon while you can get it. It is a very strange thing, with all you gentlemen on board, and with all those guns lying about, but we are drawing nearer and nearer to starvation. I wish you would give up hunting seals, and shoot something useful."

Here our young Doctor appears with certain bottles that have been cooling in the water.

"There must be plenty of rock pigeons in the caves we passed this morning, on the other island," he says.

"Oh, not those beautiful birds!" says she of the empty larder. "We cannot have Hurlingham transported to the Highlands."

"Whoever tries to shoot those pigeons won't find it a Hurlingham business," he remarks.

But the Laird has a soul above luncheons, and larders, and pigeon-shooting. He is still profoundly absorbed in thought.

"No," he says, at length, to the young lady who, as usual, is by his side. "I am wrong!"

She looks up at him with some surprise.

"Yes, I am wrong," he says decisively. "Ye must keep in that island. Ye must sacrifice picturesqueness to truth. Never mind the picture: keep the faithful record. In after life ye will be able to get plenty of pictures; but ye may not be able to get an exact record of the things ye saw when ye were sailing with the *White Dove*."

"Well, you know, sir," observes Miss Avon, with a somewhat embarrassed smile, "you don't give me much encouragement. You always speak as if I were to be compelled to keep those sketches. Am I to find nobody silly enough to buy them?"

Now, somehow or other of late, the Laird has been more and more inclined to treat this sale of Mary Avon's pictures as a most irresistible joke. He laughs and chuckles at the mere mention of such a thing, just as if Homesh were somewhere about.

"Sell them!" he says, with another deep chuckle. "Ye will never sell them. Ye could not have the heart to part with them."

"The heart has to be kept in proper subjection," says she, lightly, "when one has to earn one's living."

Queen Titania glances quickly at the girl; but apparently there is no profound meaning concealed in this speech. Miss Avon has taken her seat on a shelving piece of grey rock; and, if she is concerned about anything, it is about the safety of certain plates and knives and such things. Her hand is quite steady as she holds out her tumbler for the Youth to pour some water into the claret.

Luncheon over, she returns to her work; and the band of seal hunters, taking to cigars and pipes, sit and watch the tide slowly ebb away from the golden-brown seaweed. Then, with many a caution as to patience and silence, they rise and get their guns and set out. Already there is a disposition to slouch the head and walk timidly; though as yet there is no need of any precaution.

"*Glückliche Reise!*" says Miss Avon, pleasantly, as we pass.

Angus Sutherland starts, and turns his head. But the salutation was not for him; it was meant for the Youth, who is understood to be the most eager of the seal hunters. And Mr. Smith, not having his answer pat, replies, "I hope so;" and then looks rather confused as he passes on, carefully stooping his head though there is no occasion whatever.

Then, by following deep gullies and crawling over open ledges, we reach points commanding the various bays; and with the utmost caution peer over or round the rocks. And whereas yesterday, being Sunday, the bays were alive with seals, disporting themselves freely in full view of a large party of people who were staring at them, to-day, being Monday, finds not a seal visible anywhere, though every one is in hiding, and absolute silence must have reigned in the island, ever since the lobster fishers left in the morning. No matter; the tide is still ebbing; the true hunter must possess his soul.

And yet this lying prone for hours on a ledge of exceedingly rough rock must have been monotonous work for our good friend the Laird. Under his nose nothing to look at but scraps of orange lichen and the stray feathers of sea birds; abroad nothing but the glassy blue sea, with the pale mountains of Jura rising into the cloudless sky. At last it seemed to become intolerable. We could see him undergoing all sorts of contortions in the effort to wrest something out of his coat-pocket without raising any portion of his body above the line of cover. He himself was not unlike a grey seal in the shadow of the rock, especially when he twisted and turned himself about without rising an inch from the surface. And in time he succeeded. We could see him slowly and carefully unfold that newspaper—probably not more than a week old—just beneath his face. He had no need of spectacles: his eyes were almost touching the page. And then we knew that he was at rest; and the hard rock and the seals all forgotten. For we took it that this local paper was one which had written a most important leading article about the proposed public park for Strathgovan, calling upon the ratepayers to arise and

assert their rights and put a check on the reckless extravagance of the Commissioners. The Laird himself was openly pointed at as one who would introduce the luxury of the later Romans into a sober Scotch community; and there were obscure references to those who seemed to consider that a man's dwelling-house should become nothing more nor less than a museum of pictures and statues, while they would apply taxes raised from a hard-working population in the adornment of places of recreation for the idle. But do you think that the Laird was appalled by this fierce onslaught? Not a bit of it. He had read and re-read it to us with delight. He had triumphantly refuted the writer's sophistries; he had exposed his ignorance of the most elementary facts in political economy; he was always rejoiced to appear before Tom Galbraith and Mary Avon as one who was not afraid to suffer for his championship of art. And then, when he had triumphed over his enemy, he would fold the paper with a sort of contented sigh; and would say with a compassionate air, "Poor crayture! poor crayture!" as if the poor crayture could not be expected to know any better.

At last—at last! The Laird makes frantic gestures with his newspaper—all the more frantic that they have to be strictly lateral, and that he dare not raise his hand. And behold! far away out there on the still, blue surface, a smooth round knob, shining and black. Without a muscle moving, eager eyes follow that distant object. The seal is not alarmed or suspicious; he sails evenly onward, seldom looking to right or left. And when he disappears there is no splash; he has had enough of breathing; he is off for his hunting in the deep seas.

What is more, he remains there. We catch no further trace of him, nor of any other living thing around those deserted bays. Human nature gives in. The Youth gets up, and boldly displays himself on a promontory, his gun over his shoulder. Then the Laird, seeing that everything is over, gets up too, yawning dreadfully, and folds his newspaper, and puts it in his pocket.

"Come along!" he calls out. "It is no use. The saints have taught the seals tricks. They know better than to come near on a working day."

And so presently the sombre party sets out again for the other side of the island, where the gig awaits us. Not a word is said. Cartridges are taken out; we pick our way through the long grass and the stones. And when it is found that Miss Avon has roughed in all that she requires of her present study, it is gloomily suggested that we might go back by way of the other island, that so haply we might secure the materials for a pigeon pie before returning to the yacht.

The evening sun was shining ruddily along the face of the cliffs as we drew near the other island; and there was no sign of life at all about the lonely shores and the tall caves. But there was another story to tell when, the various guns having been posted, the Youth boldly walked up to the mouth of the largest of the caves, and shouted.

Presently there were certain flashes of blue things in the mellow evening light; and the sharp bang! bang! of the gun, that echoed into the great hollows. Hurlingham? That did not seem much of a Hurlingham performance. There were no birds standing bewildered on the fallen trap, wondering whether to rise or not; but there were things coming whizzing through the air that resembled nothing so much as rifle bullets with blue wings. The Youth, it is true, got one or two easy shots at the mouth of the cave; but when the pigeons got outside and came flashing over the heads of the others, the shooting was, on the whole, a haphazard business. Nevertheless, we got a fair number for Master Fred's larder, after two of the men had acted as retrievers for three-quarters of an hour among the rocks and bushes. Then away again for the solitary vessel lying in the silent loch, with the pale mists stealing over the land, and the red sun sinking behind the Jura hills.

Again, after dinner, amid the ghostly greys of the twilight, we went forth on another commissariat excursion, to capture fish. Strange to say, however, our Doctor, though he was learned on the subject of flies and tackle, preferred to remain on board: he had some manuscript to send off to London. And his hostess said she would remain, too; she always has plenty to do about the saloon. Then we left the *White Doves* and rowed away to the rocks.

But the following conversation, as we afterwards heard, took place in our absence:—

"I wished very much to speak to you," said Angus Sutherland, to his hostess, without making any movement to bring out his desk.

"I thought so," said she; not without a little nervous apprehension.

And then she said quickly, before he could begin—

"Let me tell you at once, Angus, that I have spoken to Mary. Of course, I don't wish to interfere; I wouldn't interfere for the world; but—but I only asked her, lest there should be any unpleasant misapprehension, whether she had any reason to be offended with you. 'None in the least,' she said. She was most positive. She even seemed to be deeply pained by the misunderstanding; and—and wished me to let you know; so you must dismiss that from your mind anyway."

He listened thoughtfully, without saying anything. At last he said—

"I have determined to be quite frank with you. I am going to tell you a secret—if it is a secret——"

"I have guessed it," she said, quickly, to spare him pain.

"I thought so," he said, quite quietly. "Well; I am not ashamed of it. I have no reason to be ashamed of it. But, since you know, you will see that it would be very embarrassing for me to remain longer on board the yacht if—if there was no hope——"

He turned over the leaves of a guide-book rapidly, without looking at them; the hard-headed Doctor had not much command over himself at this moment.

"If you have guessed, why not she?" he said, in a somewhat hurried and anxious manner. "And—and—if I am to go, better that I should know at once. I—I have nothing to complain of—I mean I have nothing to reproach her with—if it is a misfortune, it is a misfortune—but—but she used to be more friendly towards me."

These two were silent. What was passing before their minds? The long summer evenings in the far northern seas, with the glory dying in the west; or the moonlight walks on the white deck, with the red star of Ushinish lighthouse burning in the south; or the snug saloon below, with its cards, and candles, and laughter, and Mary Avon singing to herself the song of Ulva? She sang no song of Ulva now.

"Mary and I are very intimate friends," says the other deliberately. "I will say nothing against her. Girls have curious fancies about such things sometimes. But I must admit—for you are my friend, too—that I am not surprised you should have been encouraged by her manner to you at one time, or that you should wonder a little at the change."

But even this mild possibility of Mary Avon's being in the wrong she feels to be incompatible with her customary championship of her friend; and so she instantly says—

"Mind, I am certain of this—that whatever Mary does, she believes to be right. Her notion of duty is extraordinarily sensitive and firm. Once she has put anything before her as the proper thing to be done, she goes straight at it; and nothing will turn her aside. And although there is something about it I can't quite understand, how am I to interfere? Interference never does any good. Why do not you ask her yourself?"

"I mean to do so, when I get the chance," said he, simply. "I merely wished to tell you that, if her answer is 'No,' it will be better for me to leave you. Already I fancy my being on board the yacht is a trouble to her. I will not be a trouble to her. I can go. If it is a misfortune, there is no one to blame."

"But if she says 'Yes!'" cried his friend; and there was a wonderful joy in her eyes, and in her excess of sympathy she caught his hand for a moment. "Oh, Angus, if Mary were to promise to be your wife! What a trip we should have then—we should take the *White Dove* to Stornoway!"

That was her ultimate notion of human happiness—sailing the *White Dove* up to Stornoway!

"I don't think there is much hope," said he, rather absently, "from her manner of late. But anything is better than suspense. If it is a misfortune, as I say, there is no one to blame. I had not the least notion that she knew Mr. Howard Smith in London."

"Nor did she."

He stared rather.

"They may have met at our house; but certainly not more than once. You see, living in a country house, we have to have our friends

down in a *staccato* fashion, and always by arrangement of a few at a time. There is no general dropping in to afternoon tea."

"He never met her in London?" he repeated.

"I should think not."

"His uncle, then: did she never see him before?"

"Certainly not."

"Then what does he mean by treating her as a sort of familiar friend who was likely to turn up any time at Denny-mains?"

His companion coloured somewhat; for she had no right to betray confidences.

"The Laird is very fond of Mary," she said, evasively. "It is quite beautiful to see those two together."

He sate for a little time in silence; and then begged to be excused—he would go on deck to smoke. But when, some little time thereafter, we returned from our brief fishing, the dark figure walking up and down the deck was not smoking at all. He paused as the gig was hauled fast to the gangway.

"What luck?"

"About two dozen."

"All lithe?"

"About half-a-dozen mackerel."

And then he assisted Mary Avon to ascend the small wooden steps. She said 'Thank you!' as she withdrew her hand from his; but the words were uttered in a low voice; and she instantly crossed to the companion and went below. He stayed on deck, and helped to swing the gig up to the davits.

Now something had got into the head of our Admiral-in-chief that night. She was very merry; and very affectionate towards Mary. She made light of her foolish wish to go away to the south. She pointed out that this continuous fine weather was only hoarding up electricity for the equinoctials; and then we should have a spin!

"We are not going to let you go, Mary; that is the long and the short of it. And we are going to keep hold of Angus, too. He is not going away yet—no, no. We have something for him to do. We shall not rest satisfied until we see him sail the *White Dove* into Stornoway harbour!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ONLY A HEADACHE.

STORNOWAY harbour, indeed! The weather was laughing at us. The glass had steadily fallen until it had got about as low as it could go with decency; and yet this next morning was more beautiful, and bright, and calm than ever! Were we to be for ever confined in this remote Loch of the Burying Place?

"Angus! Angus! where are you?" the Admiral calls out, as she comes up on deck.

"Here I am," calls out a voice in return, from the cross-trees.

She raises her head, and perceives the ruddy-faced Doctor hanging on by the ratlines.

"Where is the fine sailing weather you were to bring us—eh?"

"I have been looking for it," he replies, as he comes down the rigging; "and there is not a breath anywhere."

"Very well," she says, promptly; "I'll tell you what you must do. You must get everybody who can handle a gun into the gig and go away up to the head of the loch there, and shoot every living thing you can see. Do you understand? We are on the brink of starvation! We are perishing! Do you want us to boil tarred rope into soup?"

"No," he says, humbly.

"Very well. Away you go. If you can't bring us any wind to take us into a civilised place, you must provide us with food; is that clear enough?"

Here Captain John comes aft, touching his cap.

"Good morning, mem! I was never seeing the like of this weather, mem."

"I don't want to see any more of it," she says, sharply. "Did you bring us in here because there was a convenient place to bury us in? Do you know that we are dying of starvation?"

"Oh, no, mem!" says Captain John, with a grin; but looking rather concerned all the same.

However, her attention is quickly called away by the sound of oars. She turns and regards this small boat approaching the yacht; and the more she looks the more do her eyes fill with astonishment.

"Well, I declare!" she says. "This is about the coolest thing I have seen for ages."

For it is Miss Mary Avon who is rowing the dingy back to the yacht; and her only companion is the Youth, who is contentedly seated in the stern, with his gun laid across his knees.

"Good morning, Mr. Smith!" she says, with the most gracious sarcasm. "Pray don't exert yourself too much. Severe exercise before breakfast is very dangerous."

The Youth lays hold of the rope; there is a fine blush on his handsome face.

"It is Miss Avon's fault," he says; "she would not let me row."

"I suppose she expected you to shoot? Where are the duck, and the snipe, and the golden plover? Hand them up!"

"If you want to see anything in the shape of game about this coast, you'd better wait till next Sunday," says he, somewhat gloomily.

However, after breakfast, we set out for the shallow head of the loch; and things do not turn out so badly after all. For we have only left the yacht some few minutes when there is a sudden whirring of

wings—a call of “Duck! duck!”—and the Doctor, who is at the bow, and who is the only one who is ready, fires a snap-shot at the birds. Much to everybody’s amazement, one drops, and instantly dives. Then begins an exciting chase. The *biorlinn* is sent careering with a vengeance; the men strain every muscle; and then another cry directs attention to the point at which the duck has reappeared. It is but for a second. Though he cannot fly, he can swim like a fish; and from time to time, as the hard pulling enables us to overtake him, we can see him shooting this way or that through the clear water. Then he bobs his head up, some thirty or forty yards off; and there is another snap-shot—the charge rattling on the water the fifth part of an instant *after* he disappears.

“Dear me!” says the Laird; “that bird will cost us ten shillings in cartridges!”

But at last he is bagged. A chance shot happens to catch him before he dives; he is stretched on the water, with his black webbed feet in the air; and a swoop of Captain John’s arm brings him dripping into the gig. And then our natural history is put to the test. This is no gay-plumaged sheldrake, or blue-necked mallard, or saw-toothed merganser. It is a broad-billed duck, of a sooty black and grey; we begin to regret our expenditure of cartridges; experiments on the flavour of unknown sea birds are rarely satisfactory. But Captain John’s voice is authoritative and definite. “It is a fine bird,” he says. And Master Fred has already marked him for his own.

Then among the shallows at the head of the loch there is many a wild pull after broods of flappers, and random firing at the circling curlew. The air is filled with the calling of the birds; and each successive shot rattles away with its echo among the silent hills. What is the result of all this noise and scramble? Not much, indeed; for right in the middle of it we are attracted by a strange appearance in the south. That dark line beyond the yacht: is it a breeze coming up the loch? Instantly the chase after mergansers ceases; cartridges are taken out; the two or three birds we have got are put out of the way; and the Laird, taking the tiller ropes, sits proud and erect. Away go the four oars with the precision of machinery; and the long sweep sends the gig ahead at a swinging pace. Behold! behold! the dark blue on the water widening! Is it a race between the wind and the gig as to which will reach the *White Dove* first?

“Give me your oar, Fred!” says the Doctor, who is at the bow.

There is but a momentary pause. Again the shapely boat swings along; and with the measured beat of the oars comes the old familiar chorus—

... *Cheerily, and all together!—*

Ho, ro, clansmen!

A long, strong pull together!—

Ho, ro, clansmen!

Soon the flowing breeze will blow ;

We'll show the snowy canvas on her—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

A long, strong pull together !—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

Wasted by the breeze of morn—

We'll quaff the joyous horn together !—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

A long, strong pull together !—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

—“We'll beat ! we'll beat !” cries the Laird, in great delight. “Give it her, boys ! Not one halfpennyworth o' that wind will we lose !”

The bow cleaves the blue water ; the foam hisses away from her rudder. It is a race of the North against the South. Then the chorus again—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

A long, strong pull together !—

Ho, ro, clansmen !

Hurrah ! hurrah ! As the gig is run alongside, and guns and birds handed up, that spreading blue has not quite reached the yacht ; there is no appreciable stir of the lazy ensign. But there is little time to be lost. The amateurs swing the gig to the davits, while the men are getting in the slack of the anchor chain ; the women are incontinently bundled below, to be out of the way of flapping sheets. Then, all hands at the haliards ! And by the time the great White Wings are beginning to spread, the breeze stirs the still air around us ; and the peak sways gently this way and that ; and they who are hard at work at the windlass are no doubt grateful for this cool blowing from the south. Then there is a cessation of noise ; we become vaguely aware that we are moving. At last the *White Dove* has spread her wings ; her head is turned towards the south. Good-bye ! you lonely loch, with the silent shores and the silent tombs—a hundred farewells to you, wherever we may be going !

And slowly we beat down the loch, against this light southerly breeze. But as we get further and further into the open, surely there is something in the air and in the appearance of the southern sky that suggests that the glass has not been falling for nothing. The sea is smooth ; but there is a strange gloom ahead of us ; and beyond the islands that we visited yesterday nothing is visible but a wan and sultry glare. Then, afar, we can hear a noise as of the approach of some storm ; but perhaps it is only the low sound of the swirling of the tides round the shores. Presently another sound attracts attention—a murmured hissing, and it comes nearer and nearer ; dark spots, about the size of a threepenny-piece, appear on the white decks. The women have scarcely time to send below for their sunshades when the slight shower passes by—the decks are not even left damp. Then further and further we creep away towards

the south; but where we expected to catch some far glimpse of the Irish coast—the blue line of Rathlin or the Antrim cliffs—there is only that dim, sultry haze.

Then another sound—a dull *flop! flop!*—in the distance; and the stragglers who have remained below after luncheon are hastily summoned on deck. And there, far away in the haze, we can dimly descry the successive curved forms of a school of dolphins, racing each other, and springing twenty or thirty feet in the air before they come down with that heavy thud on the water. Those of us who have watched the beautiful lithe fish racing and chasing by the side of an Atlantic vessel, would fain have been somewhat nearer; but we can only see the dim forms springing into the haze. Then the dull pistol-shots in the south slowly cease, and we are left alone on the low murmuring sea.

“But where is Miss Mary?” says the Laird, suddenly becoming aware of the absence of his chief companion.

“Oh, she is in the saloon!” says his hostess, quickly and anxiously. “She is doing something to one of her water-colours. I suppose we must not disturb her.”

“No, no; certainly not,” returns the Laird, lightly; and then he adds, with a smile which is meant to be very significant, “There is never any harm in hard work. Let her go on; she will have a fine collection of sketches before she leaves the *White Dove*.”

But our Queen Tita does not respond to that careless joke. There is a curious, constrained look on her face; and she quite peremptorily negatives a suggestion of the Youth that he should go below for the draught-board. Then one of us perceives that Angus Sutherland is not on deck.

Has the opportunity come at last, then, for the clearing away of all secret troubles? What end is there to be to this momentous interview? Is it Stornoway harbour? Is our frank-eyed young Doctor to come up with a silent wonder and joy on his face—a message that needs no speech—message that only says, “About with the yacht, and let us run away to the northern seas and Stornoway?” The friend of these two young people can hardly conceal her anxiety. She has got hold of the case of an opera glass, and opens and shuts it quickly and aimlessly. Then there is a step on the companion way; she does not look; she only knows that Angus Sutherland comes on deck, and then goes forward to the bow of the gig, and stands by himself, and looks out to sea.

There is silence on board; for a low rumble of thunder has been heard once or twice, and we are listening. The mountains of Jura are dark now, and the sultry mist in the south is deeper in its gloom. This condition of the atmosphere produces a vague sense of something about to happen, which is in itself uncomfortable; one would almost like to see a flash of lightning, or hear the thunderous advance of a storm breaking in upon the oppressive calm.

The Laird goes forward to Angus Sutherland.

“Well, Doctor, and what think ye of the weather now?”

The younger man starts and turns round, and for a second looks at the Laird as if he had not quite comprehended the question.

"Oh, yes!" he says. "You are quite right. It does look as if we were going to have a dirty night."

And with that he turns to the sea again.

"Aye," says the Laird, sententiously. "I am glad we are in a boat we need have no fear of—none! Keep her away from the shore, and we are all right. But—but I suppose we will get into some harbour to-night, after all?"

"It does not matter," he says, absently; and then he goes away up to the bow. He is alone there; for the men have gone below for dinner—with the exception of John of Skye, who is at the helm.

Presently the special friend of the young man puts aside that opera-glass case, and walks timidly forward to the bow of the yacht. She regards him somewhat anxiously; but his face is turned away from her—looking over to the gloomy Jura hills.

"Angus," she says, briskly, "are we not going very near Jura, if it is West Loch Tarbert we are making for?"

He turned to her then, and she saw by his face that something had happened.

"You have spoken to her, Angus?" she said, in a low voice; and her earnest, kind eyes regarded the young man as if to anticipate his answer.

"Yes."

For a second or so he seemed disinclined to say more; but presently he added, scarcely looking at her—

"I am sorry that I must leave you the first time we get near land."

"Oh, Angus!"

It was almost a cry—uttered in that low, piteous voice. Then he looked at her.

"You have been very kind to me," said he, so that no one should hear. "It is only a misfortune. But I wish I had never seen the *White Dove*."

"Oh, Angus; don't say that!"

"It is my own fault. I should never have come from Edinburgh. I knew that. I knew I was hazarding everything. And she is not to blame——"

He could say no more, for one or two of the men now came up from the fore-castle. His hostess left him and went aft, with a hurt and indignant look on her face. When the Laird asked why Miss Mary did not come on deck, she said, "I don't know," with an air which said she had ceased to take any further care in Mary Avon's actions. And at dinner, what heed did she pay to the fact that Mary Avon was rather white, and silent, and pained-looking? She had been disappointed. She had not expected the friend of her bosom to act in this heartless manner. And as for Howard Smith, she treated that young gentleman with a cold courtesy which rather astonished him.

After dinner, when the men folk had gone on deck, and when she was preparing to go too, a timid, appealing hand was laid on her arm.

"I would like to speak to you," said the low voice of Mary Avon.

Then she turned—only for a second.

"I think I know enough of what has happened, Mary," said she; "and it would not be right for me to intermeddle. Young people are the best judges of their own affairs."

The appealing hand was withdrawn; the girl retired to the saloon, and sate down alone.

But here, on deck, an eager council of war was being held; and Angus Sutherland was as busy as any one with the extended chart—the soundings barely visible in the waning light—and proposals and counter-proposals were being freely bandied about. Night was coming on; dirty-looking weather seemed to be coming up from the south; and the mouth of West Loch Tarbert is narrow and shallow in parts, and studded with rocks—a nasty place to enter in the dark. Moreover, when should we get there, beating against this south-easterly wind? What if we were to put her head round, and run for some improvised harbour among the small islands under the shadow of the Jura hills, and wait there for daylight to show us across the Sound?

There was but one dissentient. Angus Sutherland seemed oddly anxious to get to West Loch Tarbert. He would himself take the helm all night; if only the men would take their turn at the look-out, one at a time. He was sure he could make the channel, if we reached the mouth of the loch before daylight. 'What! with nothing shallower on the chart than four fathoms! How could there be any danger?

But the more prudent counsels of John of Skye at length prevail, and there is a call to the men forward to stand by. Then down goes the helm; her head slews round with a rattling of blocks and cordage; the sheets of the head-sails are belayed to leeward; and then, with the boom away over the starboard davits, we are running free before this freshening breeze.

But the night is dark as we cautiously creep in under the vast shadows of the Jura hills. Fortunately in here the wind is light; the *White Dove* seems to feel her way through the gloom. All eyes are on the look-out; and there is a general shout as we nearly run on a buoy set to mark a sunken ship. But we glide by in safety; and in due course of time the roar of the anchor chain tells us that we are snug for the night.

"But where is Miss Mary?" says the Laird, in the cheerfully-lit saloon. He looks around him in an uncomfortable and unsettled way. The saloon is not the saloon when Mary Avon is out of it; here is her chair next to his as usual, but it is vacant. How are we to spend the last happy hour of chatting and joking without the pleased, bright face, and the timid, gentle, shy, dark eyes?

"Mary has gone to her cabin," says her hostess. "I suppose she has a headache."

She supposes the girl has a headache, and has not asked! And can it be really Mary Avon that she is speaking of in that cold, hurt, offended way!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN THE DARK.

AND then the next morning the Laird is infinitely distressed.

"What! not better yet?" he says. "Dear me! I wish I could be a woman for a while, to take some tea in to her, and read to her, and coax her into better spirits. What a bad headache it must be!"

But this generous sympathy on the part of one who is little more than an acquaintance touches the heart of Mary Avon's particular friend. She reproaches herself for her cruelty. She not only gets the tea and takes it into the cabin, but she adopts a domineering tone, and declares that until the young lady begins her breakfast she will not leave the place. And then she looks at the timid, worn face; and her hand is placed gently on the hand of her friend, and she says in a lower voice—

"Mary, don't think I am angry. I am only a little bit disappointed. But I don't blame you—you could not help it. It is a pity; that is all."

The girl's face remains rather sad; but she is quite self-possessed.

"You will let me go away," she says, looking down, "when we get to some harbour?"

"There is no need," says her friend, regarding her. "Angus will leave us to-day, as soon as we get across to Cantyre."

"Oh!" she said quickly, and looking up with a brief appeal in her eyes. "I hope not! Why should he go away? I must go; I would rather go."

"Oh, no, Mary!" her friend said. "If there is any 'must' in the matter, it is on his side; for you know his time is very valuable, and you must have guessed why he has already far exceeded what he proposed to himself as his holiday. No, no, Mary; let us forget what has happened as soon as we can, and make the best of the rest of our sailing. The Laird would have a fit, if you seriously threatened to go. And I am sure you are not to blame."

So she kissed her on the cheek, by way of reconciliation, and left. And she told the Laird that Mary had been dutiful, and had taken some breakfast, and would be up on deck in course of time.

Meanwhile, those who had gone on deck had found the *White Dove* lying in a dead calm, some three miles away from her anchorage of the previous night; her sails hanging limp; a scorching sun on the white decks, and a glare of light coming from the blue sky and the glassy blue sea.

"Well, Angus," says his hostess, very merrily—for she does not wish to let the others guess the reason of his sudden departure; "you see the

weather does not approve of your leaving us. What has become of your thunderstorm? Where is the gale from the south, John?"

"I was never seeing the like of this weather, mem," said the bearded skipper. Then he added, anxiously, "And is Dr. Sutherland himself going away from the yat?"

"He would like to," she says; "but how is he ever to see land again if you banish the wind so?"

"But it will no be like this long!" says Captain John, eagerly—for he appears to think that Dr. Sutherland has got tired of the fine weather. "Oh, no, mem! I will answer for it. If Dr. Sutherland will wait another day, or two days, I am sure there will be plenty of wind. And we can lie in West Loch Tarbert for one day, or two days——"

"And starve?" she says, abruptly.

But now it appears that one or two of the men have heard of a mysterious village lying somewhere inland from the mouth of the loch; and from a comparison of these vague rumours we gather that we may not be so far from civilisation after all. Perhaps we may once again behold loaf-bread. Visions of cutlets, fowls, grouse, and hares arise. We shall once more hear some echo of the distant world if perchance there be in the place a worn and ancient newspaper.

"Aye," said the Laird, hastily. "I would like to see a Glasgow newspaper! I'm thinking they must have got the steam fire-engine by now; and fine games the bairns will have when they begin to practise with it, skelping about in the water. It would be a grand thing to try it in the public garden when we get it; it would keep the shrubs and the borders fine and wet—eh?"

"And it would be quite as interesting as any plaster fountain," says his hostess, encouragingly.

"As handsome every bit," says the Laird, laughing heartily at his play of imagination, "as any bit laddie done up in stucco, standing on one leg, and holding up a nipe! It's a utilitarian age, ma'am—a utilitarian age; we will have instead of a fountain a steam fire-engine—very good! very good!—and they bodies who are always crying out against expenditure on decoration will be disappointed for once."

The Laird had at last discovered the whereabouts of the mysterious village on the Admiralty chart.

"But what newspaper will we get in a place hidden away like that?—out of the reach of all communication wi' the world. They'll be a century behind, mark my words. It is when ye live within a reasonable distance of a great centre of ceivilisation, like Glasgow, that ye feel the life of it stirring your own place too; and ye must keep up with the times; ye must be moving. Conservative as I am, there is no super-steetious obstinacy about me; moving—moving—that's the word. The more important the matter in the interest of the public, the more necessary is it that we should have an impartial mind. If ye show me a new sort of asphalte, do ye think I would not examine it, jist because I recommended Jamieson and MacGregor's patent?"

He appealed boldly to his hostess.

"Oh, certainly; certainly you would!" she says, with an earnestness that might have made Jamieson and MacGregor quail.

"For three weeks," says the Laird, solemnly, "I was on that committee, until it seemed that my breakfast, and my dinner, and my supper every day was nothing but tar-smoke. What wi' the experiments without and within, I was just filled with tar-smoke. And would ye believe it, ma'am, one o' they Radical newspapers went as far as to say there were secret influences at work when Jamieson and MacGregor was decided on. My friends said, 'Prosecute the man for libel;' but I said 'No; let the poor crayture alone; he has got to earn his living!'"

"That was very wise of you, sir," says his hostess.

"Bless me! If a man in public life were to heed everything that's said about him," observes the Laird, with a fine air of unconcern, "what would become of his time! No, no; that is not the principle on which a public man should found his life. Do your best for your fellow-creatures, and let the squabblers say what they like. As ah say, the poor wretches have to earn their living."

Here Mary Avon appeared, somewhat pale and tired-looking; and the Laird instantly went to condole with her, and to get her a deck chair, and what not. At the same moment, too, our young Doctor came along—perhaps with a brave desire to put an end to her embarrassment at once—and shook hands with her, and said "Good morning; I hope your headache is better." Her hand was trembling as it fell away from his; and her "Yes, thank you," was almost inaudible. Then she sat down, and the Laird resumed his discoursé.

"I was once taken," said he, "by a fellow-commissioner of mine to a sort of singing place, or music hall, in Glasgow."

"What?"

"They wanted to have some such place in Strathgovan," continued the Laird, paying no heed; "and I was asked to go and see what sort of entertainment was provided in such places. It was a sorrowful sight, ma'am—a sorrowful sight; the wretched craytures on the stage laughing at their own songs, and the people not laughing at all, but given over to tobacco smoking, and whisky, and talking amongst themselves. No glint of humour—stupid, senseless stuff. But there was one young man sung a song that had a better sound in it—I cannot remember the words—but I sometimes think there was common sense in them: it was about minding your own business, and doing your own work, and letting fools say or think of ye what they please. Aye, I think there was something in that young man; though I doubt, by the look of his eyes, but he was a drinker."

He turned to Mary Avon, who had been content to be a mute and unobserved listener.

"Well, Miss Mary," said he, brightly, "and the headache is going! And are ye looking forward to getting letters and newspapers when we get back to the world? There is a post office at that village of Clachan, John?"

"Oh, aye, sir!" said John; "there will be a post office."

The Laird looked up at him reproachfully.

"But why cannot ye learn the English pronunciation, man? What's the necessity for ye to say *posht offus*? Cannot ye pronounce the plain English—*post office*?"

"I am not very good at the English, sir," said Captain John, with a grin.

"Ye'll never learn younger."

Then he went to Mary Avon, and suggested that a walk up and down the deck might do her headache good; and when she rose he put her hand on his arm.

"Now, said he," as they started off, "I do not like headaches in young people; they are not natural. And ye may think I am very inqueesitive; but it is the privilege of old men to be talkative and inqueesitive—and I am going to ask you a question."

There was certainly no effort at keeping a secret on the part of the Laird; every one might have heard these two talking as they quietly walked up and down.

"I am going to ask ye, plump and plain, if ye are not anxious about going to London, and worrying yourself about the selling of your pictures? There now; answer me that."

"Not very much, sir," she says, in a low voice.

"Listen to me," he said, speaking in a remarkably emphatic way. "If that is on your mind, dismiss it. I tell you what: I will undertake, on my own responsibeelity, that every painting in oil, and every sketch in oil, and every water-colour drawing, and every sketch in water-colour that ye have on board this yacht, will be sold within one fortnight of your leaving the yacht. Do ye understand that?"

"You are very kind, sir."

"I am not bletherin'," said he; "no man ever knew me draw back from my word. So put that anxiety away from your mind altogether, and let us have no more troubles. I could sell—I could sell four times as many for ye in a fortnight! Bless ye, lassie, ye do not know the people in the West of Scotland yet—ye'll know them better by-and-by. If there's one thing they understand better than another it is a good picture; and they are ready to put their hand in their pocket. Oh! they Edinburgh bodies are very fine creetics—they have what they believe to be an elegant society in Edinburgh—and they talk a great deal about pictures; but do they put their hand in their pocket? Ask Tom Galbraith. Ask him where he gets three-fourths of his income. in Edinburgh; but he gets his income from the West of Scotland. Tom's a wise lad. He knows how to feather his nest. And when he has become independent of the picture-dealers, then he'll go to London, and fight the men there on their own ground."

"I should like to see some of Mr. Galbraith's work," she said, "before I return to England."

"You will have plenty of leisure to look at them by-and-by," replied the Laird, quite simply. "I have some of Tom's very best things at Denny-mains."

It was not until the cool of the afternoon that a light breeze sprung up to fill the sails of the *White Dove*, and press her gently on towards the coast of Cantyre. By this time every one on board knew that Angus Sutherland was leaving, and leaving for good.

"I hope ye will come and see me at Denny-mains, Dr. Sutherland," said the Laird, good-naturedly, "when ye happen to be in Scotland. I have a neighbour there ye would be glad to meet—a man who could talk to ye on your own subjects—Mr. Stoney."

Our Doctor paid but little heed. He was silent, and distraught. His eyes had an absent and heavy look in them.

"A most distinguished man," the Laird continued. "I am told his reputation in England is just as great as it is in this country. A very distinguished man indeed. He read a paper before the British Association not many years ago."

"About what, do you remember?" said the other, at last.

"H'm!" said the Laird, apparently puzzling his memory. "Ye see, a man in my poseetion has so much to do with the practical business of life, that perhaps he does not pay just attention to the speculations of others. But Mr. Stoney is a remarkable man; I am astonished ye should have forgotten what the paper was about. A most able man, and a fine, logical mind; it is just beautiful to hear him point out the close fitness between the charges in the major proposeetion in the Semple case, and the averments and extracts in the minor. Ye would be greatly delighted and instructed by him, Doctor. And there's another thing."

Here the Laird looked slyly at Mary Avon.

"There's a young leddy here who has a secret of mine; and I'm thinking she has not said much about it. But I will make a public confession now: it has been on my mind for some time back that I might buy a screw yacht."

The Laird looked triumphantly around; he had forgotten that it was a very open secret.

"And wouldn't it be a strange thing if this very party, just as we are sitting now, were to be up at this very spot next year, on board that yacht?—wouldn't that be a strange thing?"

"It would be a jolly pleasant thing," said the Youth.

"You are very kind to include me in the invitation," said Angus Sutherland; "but I doubt whether I shall ever be in Scotland again. My father is a very old man now; that is the only thing that would call me north. But I think I could get on better with my own work by going abroad for some years—to Naples, probably. I have to go to Italy before long, anyway."

He spoke in a matter-of-fact way; we did not doubt that he might pursue his researches better in Naples.

It was in the dusk of the evening that we slowly sailed into West Loch Tarbert—past a series of rocks and islands on which, as we were given to understand, seals were more abundant than limpets. But whereas the last haunt of the seals we had visited had introduced us to a solitary and desolate loch, with sterile shores and lonely ruins, this loch, so far as we could see, was a cheerful and inhabited place, with one or two houses shining palely white amid the dark woods. And when we had come to anchor, and sent ashore, although there were no provisions to be got, the men returned with all the necessary information for Angus Sutherland. By getting up very early next morning, and walking a certain distance, he would catch a certain coach, which would take him on to Tarbert on Loch Fyne in time to catch the steamer.

And so that night, before we turned in to our respective cabins, the Doctor bade us all formally good-bye; and Mary Avon among the rest. No one could have noticed the least difference in his manner.

But in the middle of the night, in the ladies' cabin, a sound of stifled sobbing. And the other woman goes over to the berth of her companion, and bends her head down, and whispers—

"Mary, why are you crying? Tell me!"

She cannot speak for a time; her whole frame is shaken with the bitter sobs. And then she says, in a low, trembling, broken voice—

"He has not forgiven me. I saw it in his face."

From the Cradle.

THEY tell me I was born a long

Three months ago,

But whether they are right or wrong

I hardly know.

I sleep, I smile, I cannot crawl,

But I can cry—

At present I am rather small—

A babe am I.

The changing lights of sun and shade

Are baby toys;

The flowers and birds are not afraid

Of baby-boys.

Some day I'll wish that I could be

A bird and fly;

At present I can't wish—you see

A babe am I.

FREDERICK LOCKER.

Klopstock.

DURING the first half of the eighteenth century, presages were not wanting in Germany of a coming literary revival. People acquired a sufficient interest in poetry to lose their tempers about it; they discussed it with zeal if not with knowledge; the rival leaders, Bodmer and Gottsched, had each a keen scent for the faults of the other, if not for his own. But the direct results of all this controversy were very meagre. Neither party as yet had a genius in its ranks. The verses produced were commonplace prose chopped into defective metre, from which all the essential elements of poetry were carefully excluded.

The German writers of the time failed in three respects. They wanted (1) the sense of form, (2) independence and national character, and (3) all contact with life. No doubt both Gottsched and Bodmer busied themselves with inquiries into language and style, but their methods were inadequate, and they were worshippers of false gods. Gottsched wrote in the French interest, but the French lightness of treatment and suggestive wit escaped him altogether, and the French wisdom of life which fulfils a Molière he never tried to acquire. In the same way Bodmer, who appealed to England, had not Shakspeare in his eye; and though he professed himself a disciple of Milton, it was only Milton's mistakes that he admired. The energy of plastic creation, the "planetary harmonies" of the English poet—for these he had no sense, and he placed him much on the same level with such respectable persons as Edward Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*. Thus the two rivals got little more from their study of foreign models than inflated blank verse and monotonous Alexandrines. And they looked upon these measures as absolutely perfect: they applied them mechanically without understanding their principles; they did not know that the form of a work of art is prescribed from within by the spirit; that it is like the shape to which a flower grows, not like a mould into which metal is cast.

But perhaps a worse fault than having an imperfect ideal was having a foreign one. No doubt every nation, if it be wise, will learn from all its neighbours; no doubt it will absorb elements offered from without. That is a vastly different thing from accepting any foreign standard. We may import tea from China without importing its mandarins. But Bodmer and Gottsched thought differently. At war in all else, they agreed in this, that Germany could produce nothing of its own; that it must imitate the literature of more fortunate countries, and that such imitations would supply all native wants.

The reason for such preposterous opinions among men of talent lay

in the separation which existed between poetry and life. People had no idea that a man's writings were connected with his character. The statement of Goethe that his poems are his confessions—the words he attributes to Tasso—

And if the human heart in silence break,
Mine is the God-given strength to tell my sorrow,—

would have been applauded as amusing paradoxes. Bodmer professed enthusiasm for Milton; but when in later days Lessing repeated Milton's principle that to write a poem one must live a poem, that no one can sing what he has not felt, Bodmer made merry over this "monstrous idea." "No, no, friend Lessing," he exclaimed; "it is not the man, it is only the poet, who loves and revels and weeps in his verses." Of course these opinions could hold ground only while there was no one of poetical insight to contradict them. As soon as men of real feeling and genius arose, their first task would be to restore literature to paths more human, more German, and more artistic. The two writers who fulfilled this mission, though in very opposite ways, were Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and Christoph Martin Wieland.

Already in Klopstock's life we see that he was peculiarly fitted for the work of reform. He was born in Quedlinburg in 1724, and like most German boys of his rank, grew up in an atmosphere of the strictest religion, but unlike most of them, with plenty of active exercise and outdoor employment. Both influences were due to his father, a man of somewhat excited pietistic notions, who believed in spectres, presages, and the bodily presence of the devil, but who was also keenly alive to the importance of muscular Christianity.* The son was not behind in either direction. One of his biographers would have us recognise in the child the ancient Cheruscan hardness described by Tacitus, and dwells with especial delight on a swimming adventure which he undertook in spite of his parents' commands. Sent to school at Pforta, the other side of his character began to disclose itself. He threw himself on the study of Greek, broke loose from the pedantry of his masters, and read Homer not as a grammatical exercise, but as the great epic of every nation and every age. The contrast of this with what in his own country were by courtesy called poems, filled him with burning shame. He vowed that if he lived he would wipe out the reproach of his fatherland; at night he could not sleep for thinking of his high career; and though his conscience accused him of worldly ambition, his heart beat high with hopes of immortality and fame. Among the rather puritanical circles in which he moved he came to be noted for a certain exuberance of life. He revelled in an excited feeling of friendship. Friendship, next to peace of conscience, was the supremest happiness of man. He was an enthusiast for field-sports. He drew up a code of laws for skating,

* There are many critics and biographers of Klopstock, but none of them excels Gervinus in his *Deutsche Dichtung*, who in this genial notice surpasses himself.

which he afterwards celebrated in an ode. Goethe too was proficient in these matters, but the eternal riding, swimming, and boating of Klopstock and his school soon became a very nuisance to the more judicious poet. When Klopstock visited Zürich Bodmer and all his pious friends were greatly shocked. They had expected a holy young prophet, and were prepared to shed tears with him over his religious poems. But the lion would not roar, or rather would not weep. He was in disgracefully high spirits, and deserted his tearful admirers to amuse the ladies of the company.

But like most men in whose character the emotional predominates, Klopstock could be as easily depressed as exalted. Some of his odes, inspired by a merely hypothetical lady, express the innermost languishing of love. In others, which, contrary to contemporary German usage, he addressed to a real lady, Fanny Schmidt, he is often hoarse with misery. With streaming eyes he entreats Bodmer to intercede for him, and Bodmer good-naturedly consents. He is jubilant at the welcome which in 1748 the first three books of his *Messiah* receive; but he is presently plunged in despair when he remembers that, tutor as he is, he cannot devote his whole soul to the undertaking. This grief was removed. Bernstorff, Prime Minister of Denmark, invited him with a pension to Copenhagen. Klopstock set out in his most expansive mood, and during the journey fell in love with Meta, or Margaretha Moller, whom he celebrated under the name of Cidli in several fine odes, and who three years later became his wife. This is the lady, who with no introduction but her admiration, struck up a correspondence with Richardson the novelist, and who, with her pleasant broken English, her talk of a "manly (i.e. male) Clarissa," and of "war, the great fiend of friendship," was at one time pretty generally known in this country. In these and other letters she appears to the full as gushing, as lachrymose, and, we may add, as high-souled as either Richardson or her husband. She returns to the days "when," to quote her own words, "I was only the single young girl." She writes of her first meeting with Klopstock: "I must confess that, though greatly prepossessed of his qualities, I never thought him the amiable youth whom I found him. This made its effect." For though merely his friend to begin with, "at the least," she proceeds, "my thoughts were ever with him filled." It is perhaps cruel to make her furnish evidence that Klopstock was a sentimentalist and a bore, but after all the statement is now in print, and she gives it with an enthusiasm too innocent to pass by. On the anniversary of her marriage she writes to a friend, "Klopstock greeted me 'Wife of my heart, best wife, rare Meta, thou angel, thou, my heart and soul.' Yes, he said all that and much more, and ah! he has been saying it already the whole year through." Which certainly is exactly what we would expect of Klopstock, but few would add with his victim, "How happy I am."

After his marriage Klopstock resided in Hamburg, where he lived a quite poetical life, idolised by his friends, his wife, and even by his wife's

family. The *Messiah* was his dream by night and his work by day, and whilst he wrote his wife prayed that he might have inspiration. Klopstock can describe the existence he now led only by the most superlative of superlatives. But it was soon to pass. After four years his wife died; his progress with his work was slow, twenty-five years elapsing between the publication of the first book and the last, and during the interval the German public gradually cooled in its enthusiasm till it grew quite severe. Klopstock consoled himself for these misfortunes as best he might. He tried his success in what he called *bardiettes*, imitations of what he fancied the poems of the bards must have been, and becoming the leader of the Patriotic School, formed a "society of bards," which met on Saturday afternoons. He also founded a Ladies' Poetical Club in Hamburg—of which Lessing's wife wrote, "I shall never be admitted, I am neither young nor pretty enough for Herr Klopstock"—and by-and-by he married again, this time a widow lady named *Winthem*. For the defection of the public he comforted himself with the admiration of aristocratic friends, who granted him pensions and paid him almost divine honours. "After the mother of the *Messiah* himself," writes one, "comes the mother of Klopstock." He lived to welcome, and then to denounce the French Revolution, both in unmeasured terms, and died in 1803.

From Klopstock's biography it seems pretty evident that his gifts are chiefly lyric. There is no trace with him of the measured, stately self-control that we associate with great epic poets, with Virgil and Dante and Milton. And still less does he possess that quick, wide sympathy with all types of character, all shades of opinion which the dramatist requires. He once pronounced it sin to love a freethinker. But his continual enthusiasm, his raptures of despair and delight, would all find their vent in the intenser kinds of lyrical composition.

It is noteworthy that Horace and Pindar were his early favourites and inspired his first poetical attempts. With them he cultivated his sense of form. As soon as he tried odes in German he found that he must have a perfect control over his language, a thorough insight into its spirit, a complete mastery of its materials. He studied it in the light of his Greek and Roman masters; he plunged into it and it bore him up; he felt he could compete with the ancients in their own measures, and contemptuously rejected what he called "the modern click-clack of rhyme." He strove with might and main to reach the old classical perfection of form, and not without success. "Klopstock," says Kolbe, "might boast as Augustus boasted of Rome, '*I found the German language brick, and left it marble.*'" It is unfortunate, but it is characteristic of the man, that this formal perfection means nothing more to him than mastery in speech, metres, and the arrangement of sounds. But in these he almost always succeeds, at least where they are the vehicle of exalted feeling. No doubt he takes liberties in his treatment of German, he forces it to be sublime, in spite of itself; what it gains in majesty, it loses in simplicity. A friend once told him that people did not under-

stand his language: "Then they may learn it," was Klopstock's reply. In this he was too proud and uncompromising, he would not take a telling. He persevered in classical constructions, involved sentences, obscure allusions, which it requires some erudition to explain. To illustrate this it is usual to quote his verse—

The pious monk's invention now resounds.

Perhaps few readers guess at once that he means *the gun is fired*, and that "the pious monk's invention" is the powder. A smart but somewhat flippant critic greatly annoyed Klopstock by proposing to translate his odes into *German*. Often he seems to have constructed his periods like Chinese puzzles, that his reader may have the pleasure of taking them to pieces again. But, after condemning all these faults, we must remember that they are by no means universal with Klopstock, and that it is very easy to make too much of them. Take him at his best and he is the unsurpassed ode-writer of the modern world (perhaps Dryden equals him in his one great effort). "Hence it comes that he has the ease and confidence of a master in all the primitive and original kinds of poetry. He seizes in its very essence the stormy ecstasy of the bards, the religious majesty of Psalms, and once or twice the more human beauty of the Greek lyrics." It has been said that in his youthful odes we hear again Pindar and David and the Edda. These names suggest a rough threefold division, not only of those, but of all his poems, according to three principles, which exercised a powerful influence on his life and development. Some of the odes are simple and severe, and have a faint breath of Greek beauty. Others are abrupt, difficult, involved and obscure, composed after Northern models and intended to express the *Urdeutsch*, the original native German. A third class are dithyrambic hymns of religious content, steeped in the spirit of David and Isaiah and St. John.

The Grecian inspiration, as we saw, was his first. In the classical world he learned the significance of form: Pindar and Horace taught him their measures and their style. All his odes may be considered as the direct or indirect outcome of these influences. "But in that alien pagan world as it was to him he could not long linger. Already when he left school he pitied Homer and Virgil for their religion's sake, and refused to follow in their steps." He placed the bard above the poet, the telyn above the lyre. "My heart," he cries, "demands tumult and storm and lofty flight, the audacious pictures of Northern song, countless, hot, and true." Thus we see him return from Greece to his own country, he is fired with the idea of independence; he will be a national poet and sing German strains; the scholar is merged in the patriot. This change it is not hard to explain. No man of sufficient poetical feeling really to appreciate the Greeks could fail to see that they were great by the inspiration of the life around them. The pulse of their people beat more quickly in their veins and the aspirations of their people shone more

brightly before their eyes. Will one reproduce Greek art, the sure way to fail is to imitate it: the only chance of success lies in making oneself the mouthpiece of one's own country and one's own time. This the young German felt. He began to search for a native hero and a native theme. He sought to revive the primitive German virtues. He wished to make his countrymen free and simple and hardy once more. This explains his passion for field-sports. "Had he been converting the heathen he could not have preached skating with greater unction." When Macpherson's *Ossian* appeared, Klopstock was in ecstasies. To call it a forgery was, in his eyes, blasphemous. Here was a poem original to the western races, "which defied Homer and shamed Apollo." Besides, in those days the distinction was not very precisely drawn between Celt and Teuton, and Klopstock was disposed to claim Ossian as the champion of all northern Europe. "Ossian was a Caledonian," says Gleim; "and therefore of German origin;" and Klopstock talks of his "Celtic or ancestral mythology." At a later day, when he composed his cumbrous allegory of the *German Republic of Letters*, he described it as a sort of society of Druids. In like manner, considering the bards common to both races, he wrote strange hybrid poems, which he called *bardiettes*, and which celebrate the feats of Arminius or Hermann, who had routed the legions of Rome. I may quote the following fragment to illustrate generally his treatment of these patriotic themes. The dialogue is between Hermann and his wife Thusnelda, when he returns from a victorious battle. The original antique metres are preserved in the translation:—

Lō! with swēāt ōn hīs brōw, with Rōman gōre stained,
 With thē dūst ōf thē bāt̄tlē dēcked hē cōmēth,
 Nē'ēr wās Hērmānn sō lōvēly,
 Thūs nēvēr flāshed hīs brīght ēye.
 Come! I tremble for joy; give me the eagles
 And thy sabre blood-reeking, come, breathe freely!
 Rest within my embraces
 After the terrible fight.
 Rest, that I from thy brow may wipe the sweat-drop,
 And the blood from thy cheek, thy cheek how glowing!
 Hermann! Hermann! Thusnelda
 Never hath loved thee as now.
 Not even when in the forests' shades so wildly
 Thou with sun-embrowned arm didst seize me, stopping
 I already beheld thee
 With immortality crowned.
 "Wherefore twin'st thou my locks? Lies not our father
 Silent, dead at our feet? Oh had Augustus
 Led his hosts to the battle
 Gorier he would lie there."
 Let me bind up thy waving hair, O Hermann,
 That it may o'er thy wreath in ringlets threaten!
 Siegmar dwelleth in Heaven,
 Follow and weep not for him.

But it was not Hermann who first suggested himself as the great epical hero of Germany. Klopstock's earliest choice was the Saxon Emperor, Henry the Fowler, who had delivered his country from the Hungarian invaders. A little unrhymed ballad on this subject remains, which is a good specimen of Klopstock's simpler style:—

Behold the foe! the fight begins,
Come on to Victory!

The bravest hero leads us on
In all our fatherland.

The sickness feels he not to-day,
There bear they him along,
Hail Henry, Hero brave and good
In fields of flashing steel!

His eyeball glows with honour's flame
And victory commands,
Around him are the nobles' helms
With hostile blood bedewed.

Oh welcome death for fatherland,
Whene'er our sinking head
With blood be decked, then will we die
With fame for fatherland.

When we before us see a plain,
And but the dead behold
Around us, conquer then will we
With fame for fatherland.

The fame we've won shall aye remain,
Yea, even when we are dead,
When we have for our fatherland
The death of honour died.

But though Klopstock at one time thought of Henry for his hero, he soon abandoned him. We instinctively think of Milton, who once, from a crowd of epical and dramatic studies, selected the history of Arthur for his life-work. But finally both poets followed the summons of the sacred muse, and probably they were right. In the ode *To my Fatherland*, Klopstock exclaims:—

Thine was I from my boyhood when my breast
Felt the first pulses of ambition spring.
I chose from heroes of the lance and crest
Henry thy rescuer to sing.
But I beheld the higher track of light,
And more than mere ambition fired my mind;
The pathway I preferred that leads from night
Up to the Fatherland of all mankind.
That I pursue, but when the toil too much
O'erburdens this mortality,
I turn aside, and, to the telyn's touch,
Sing, Fatherland, thy fame to thee.

"In this way," laments Gervinus, "he sacrificed Homer for Ossian

and both for David." But this was really the best, indeed, the only thing he could do. How could he have sung a German heroic when Germany at the time did not exist? The disastrous Peace of Westphalia had made any practical patriotism impossible. The little princelings had received sovereign powers which made them independent of their Emperor on the one hand, and of their subjects on the other. Neither unity nor freedom existed; there was no German empire and no German people. Klopstock might feel that patriotic sentiment that burns itself out in an ode; but the love of country which is necessary to inspire a great effort, which springs from love and gratitude and complete self-surrender, how could he feel that for a land "where the subjects were lackeys and the sovereigns were brutes?" For the monarch who laid the foundations of a new Germany, for Frederick the Great of Prussia, Klopstock on religious grounds had no sympathy; and indeed in his odes, though not in his life, all kings indiscriminately were "sots, albinos, and ourang-outangs." In these circumstances what catholic interest remained on which he could feel strongly save the interest of religion? Discontented with his own fatherland he turned to the "Fatherland of all mankind." "I searched for a hero," he says, "and sank exhausted. Then suddenly him, whom as a Christian I loved, as a poet I saw with one swift triumphant glance." Whatever faults there may be in the choice of subject and in the execution, we have here at least the first essential condition fulfilled, *the poet feels what he is writing about*. He will pour his life into this chalice, he will consecrate all his powers to this task. The fruit of his classical studies, the noble hexameters which few could wield as he, his exuberant and headlong diction, the inheritance from his Northern ancestry, these, he says, "I will now hallow by dedicating them to religion." He strove and struggled with himself to delay beginning his work till he was thirty years of age. But his subject possessed and overwhelmed him. It carried him away; he could not resist it, he *had* to begin. Feeling begets feeling: a poem which issued from such a state of mind must succeed: the first three cantos of the *Messiah* awoke an enthusiasm equal to the author's own. No doubt a reaction followed on both sides. Klopstock alternated between exaltation and ague, fever and depression. The public turned away from a work which at each further stage looked less and less like an epic. But meanwhile the deed had been done, the stimulus given. Henceforth there could be no question that the Germans had in them poetry of their own. They could now advance to their new classical period. They could never return to the "masterpieces" which had disgraced the last two hundred years.

In his choice of a subject we must admit that Klopstock was wrong. When a poet treats a larger theme he is generally exposed to a twofold danger. On the one hand his tastes may be a little recondite, he may select what is neither well known nor popular. In this case he will fail to excite catholic sympathy, his work will not be national nor ever

become household property. Or, again, he may choose what is too familiar, what is already sacred and hallowed in the minds of the people, so that no further artistic development is possible, and all change is regarded with suspicion. No one out of France is rash enough to write a new *Hamlet*, and Klopstock was guilty of almost as much foolhardiness when he undertook to work up the simple stories of the Gospel into an elaborate epic poem.

And the very conditions which determined his choice made it impossible for him fully to succeed. It was his orthodoxy dashed with pietism that drew him to the subject. Now while his pietism filled him with devout brooding reverence for the figure of Christ, his orthodoxy forced him to view it only through the old dogmas. These prescribed a certain treatment and forbade a certain treatment. He could not piece together, reject, remodel, and humanise. We have seen this done in the prose of Renan and others with at least far more artistic results than came within the range of Klopstock's verse. Even the Evangelical theologian, Dr. Dorner, says of him, "He failed to perceive that the divine, save when human, remains unrevealed, and hovers in a sublime haziness, which may inspire aspiration and ecstasy, but never keen plastic contemplation." Klopstock conceives the divine in what Dr. Dorner would call its unrevealed state. He seeks its expression not in the workings of man's spirit, but in signs and wonders. So, instead of bringing his theme more fully and clearly within our consciousness, he shifts it further away. To this result his artistic concurred with his religious orthodoxy. He held the baleful tenet that an epic poem demands supernatural machinery. All of it, therefore, which he found ready to his hand seemed to require enlargement rather than dismantling. So he introduces a multitude of marvels, a crowd of persons, an enormous daemonic apparatus, of which the Evangelists know nothing, and which every judicious reader must feel to be out of place. Samma, a convert, Philo, a Pharisee, play important parts, and Pilate's wife, Portia, with her dreams and presentiments, has nearly a whole canto to herself. Nicodemus, Joseph, Lazarus, are made the heroes of imaginary occurrences. Indeed all the minor characters of the Gospel, who are introduced casually, whose names are hardly mentioned, or are left unmentioned, become the centre of detailed and fantastical romances. Perhaps the most ridiculous example is the little love story of Semida and Cidli, the young man of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. Since both died and both were raised from the dead, Klopstock discovers that they were evidently intended for each other. Their connection is not indeed mentioned in Holy Writ, but, thank heaven! Herr Klopstock is at hand to remedy such omissions! So he conducts them through a long and tearful courtship, and at length unites them amid a company of glorified saints and prophets who visit the earth after the Crucifixion. Most of Klopstock's admirers would think this blasphemy, did it not occur in a religious poem.

Perhaps even more superfluous are the hosts of angels, demons, and

genii who are intended to help on the action, but who really impede it. Nothing happens save through their agency. Herder condemns this with rather an amusing illustration. The Evangelist in his story of the Crucifixion says, "Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." These simple words are intended to bring out the solemnity of the time, and do so completely. But in Klopstock, the seraph Uriel has been waiting for the proper moment, and then punctually signals to a star to place itself before the sun. In the same way no one can talk or think but it is by the prompting of an angel or a devil. "We get to know not men, but their guardian spirits." This fashion of supernatural poetry became the bane of Germany, and Lessing proposed to write a satire upon it in which old Gottsched should ride out "to hunt the seraphim." Klopstock only once attempts to portray character, and that is in the case of the fallen angel Abaddon. Abaddon was penitent, and his fate excited great interest in Germany. It became one of the burning questions of the day. The Zürich society supplicated for him, and in Magdeburg his salvation was solemnly decreed. This is not without parallel in England. Prayers have been offered that little Dombey might not die, and—what is even more à propos—that Lovelace's soul might be saved. In Germany these pious efforts were crowned with success, and at the end of the poem, when Abaddon beseeches God to annihilate him, he is mercifully restored to his place in heaven.

He alone of all the spirits has definite features. The others are a shadowy host, distinguishable only by their names. Schiller says truly, "From all that he touches Klopstock withdraws the body." And yet despite that, he is grossly materialistic. He places the infernal regions in the centre of the earth, lighted by a sun of their own. He describes God as a visible figure in space. He conceives spirit as body that has somehow ceased to be solid. Coleridge rather unkindly translates his name "Clubstick," and certainly he has no great subtlety of discernment or fineness of thought!

This defect shows itself in the whole plan of the poem, or rather in its absence of plan. When the early cantos appeared, and every one was raving about the new epic, Lessing cautioned the people that their applause was premature. "You can't judge a work of art from the parts," he said, "but only as a whole." This warning was disregarded at the time, but every new canto proved more and more conclusively that Lessing's fears had been well founded. What an epic imperatively demands is unity of action, but the *Messiah* had in the first place no unity, and in the second no action. Christ is nailed on the Cross at the beginning of the eighth book; angels, mortals, saints, and devils gather round, sing and declaim during his dying agonies; and at last he gives up the ghost at the end of the tenth book. Now, one would think the story must draw to a close, the catastrophe is passed, the goal is reached. But in ten other cantos, quite as long as the first ten, Klopstock, with choruses, colloquies,

and hymns, by a lavish use of celestial armies and the spirits of just men made perfect, fills up the interval between the Crucifixion and the Ascension. If this betrays a want of epical power, there is much else that absolutely contradicts the idea of a narrative poem. Instead of deeds, we have long debates; instead of acting, people talk. If before we were offended by Klopstock's interpolations, now we must marvel at his omissions. The procession to the Cross, the threefold denial of Peter, the end of Judas, should have been godsend to the poet; already there are touches about them hardly to be found out of our best old ballads. But Klopstock does not know when he is well off. We see the spectacle on the Cross; of the Via Dolorosa we hear no word. Peter's treason takes place in the background, and when all is over he comes forward and "weeps himself" (*erweint sich*) the martyr's crown. At Judas' suicide, first the culprit makes a long speech, then his genius and a bad angel discourse together, and finally the departed spirit joins in the talk with a fatal fluency that death has not impaired. Not only does everybody speak, but their words are broken with passion: they foam at the mouth, or if they do not lose their self-control, it is because they are sublime. Everything is at the highest possible pitch. "For very feeling," says Lessing, "we feel nothing." Klopstock exasperates his reader with continual interjections; he had to be reminded, "Not every one that crieth Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of poetry." The same phrases occur in wearisome iteration. Everybody wonders and weeps and swoons and smiles and embraces everybody else, and dissolves in tears scalding or holy as the case may be. This last performance is especially Klopstockian. In almost every page one finds the expression "weeping eyes."

All these criticisms we must make if we take Klopstock at his word and regard the *Messiah* as an epic poem. But if we do this we are less than just. We shall gain a truer point of view if for a moment we contrast the *Messiah* and the *Paradise Lost*. We will not echo Coleridge's biting answer to those who called Klopstock a German Milton. "Yes, a very German one!" Rather we must decide that the two poets have as little as possible in common. With Milton everything has distinctness, firm outline, definite shape. Even his more hideous images have been compared by Winckelmann to beautifully painted gorgons. But no one in his senses would think of naming painting in the same breath with Klopstock. With him there is nothing fixed, nothing plastic; to use one of his own favourite formulas, "all things melt in feeling." Take even the following noble stanza on death:—

Again to bloom the seed the sower sows,
The Lord of Harvest goes
Gathering the sheaves,
Death's sickle reaps and leaves;
Praise ye the Lord.

It is not too much to say that no pictorial thinker could have written

this, for it labours under a radical confusion ; sowing and reaping, seed time and harvest, are both employed as types of death. It certainly is no picture, but does it not suggest another art ? Take now this poem, which he calls the *Rose Wreath* :—

I found her by a shady rill,
I bound her with a wreath of rose,
She felt it not, but slumbered still.
I looked on her, and on the spot
My life with hers did blend and close.
I felt it, but I knew it not.
Some lisping broken words I spoke,
And rustled light the wreath of rose,
Then from her slumber she awoke ;
She looked on me and from that hour
Her life with mine did blend and close,
And round us it was Eden's bower.

The presentiment, the dreaminess, the hush of feeling that mark these lines at least in the original, do they not come over the soul like a breath of melody ? All poetry contains ideally the arts of painting and music. It is word-painting and word-music, though it is something more than their union. Klopstock's peculiarity lies in this, that with him the first element is more nearly wanting, and the second more fully present than with almost any other poet. One more quotation for the sake of one more comparison will serve to illustrate this. It is from his ode on skating :—

Sunk in the tomb on endless night
Is many a great inventor's name ;
Our torch we kindle at their light,
But where is their reward and fame ?
How name ye him who ocean crossed
First with tall mast and swelling sheet ?
Nor would I that his name were lost,
Who added wings to flying feet :

For should not he immortal live
Whose art can health and joy enhance,
Such as no mettled steed can give,
Nor ever panteth in the dance ?

The scene is filled with vapoury light,
As when the winter morning's prime
Looks on the lake ; above it night
Scatters like stars the glittering rime.

How still and white is all around,
How rings the track with new-sparred frost ;
Far off the metal's cymbal sound
Betrays thee for a moment lost.

Why to the isle dost list aloof,
Unpractised skaters clamour there,

The ice not yet will load and hoof
Above or net beneath it bear.

Ah, nought upon thine ear is lost,
There wailings loud the death crash makes.
How different sounds it when the frost
Runs splitting miles along the lakes.

Now contrast this with what Wordsworth says about skating in his poem on the "Influence of Natural Objects." I regret that I cannot quote it in full:—

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

How precise and graphic and distinct all this is when compared with Klopstock's hazy rapture. And the opinions of the two men about Ossian point the same moral. His "want of firm outline," to which Wordsworth objects, is precisely what attracts Klopstock. For this, and Ossianic mastery of vague emotion and feeling for sound as sound, are all qualities of his own. Herder said that his odes must be read aloud; "then," he proceeds, "they rise from the page and become a dance of syllables." This is quite true, and Klopstock too often prefers the syllable to the word, the music to the meaning; he tickles our ears with pages of "sound and fury, signifying nothing." To such an extent does he proceed in the 20th canto of the *Messiah*, that his English translator * has not ventured to render it. It contains little more than shouts of Hosannah, choruses of Hallelujah, wavings of triumphal palms. Clearly the relation here is not with the painter, but with the musician. Gervinus reminds us that seven years before Klopstock began his poem, his countryman Händel had composed his famous Oratorio on the same subject, and with the same name. Klopstock, who loved music with his whole soul, had a peculiar affection for this piece, and regarded it as his own and his country's glory.

His own work is much liker an oratorio than an epic. It is one great ode, or rather a great collection of great odes. Klopstock is always

* Mrs. Collyer (or Mrs. Meeke). It may be remarked that Klopstock was unfortunate in the quality, though not in the quantity, of his translators; and his complaints about this formed one item in his famous conversation with Wordsworth and Coleridge. From what I have said it is clear that Klopstock must lose more than most men, even when well rendered; and if Herder could see the English versions he would call them "a prance of syllables." From these strictures, however, Mr. Nind must be emphatically exempted. All the rhymed translations which I have here used are by him, and their one fault is that they are rhymed. The unrhymed verse is by Mr. Baskerville.

a lyrical poet, and he is never more lyrical than in the *Messiah*. If we look at it in this light we shall like it better. Indeed, much that was repugnant to the idea of an epic we may now find to be powerful and impressive. We can now understand why the fragments were so popular while the whole failed to tell; for the parts must be read as lyrics. From this point of view some of the individual passages are in their way unsurpassed. Thus the description of Adramelech's flight is lofty and sustained. Ever on the watch, he seizes the moment when the Messiah is exhausted and agonised. He swoops like a vulture from his lonely rock, and flies through the desolate valley. For an instant he pauses above a suicide who lies weltering in his blood, and whose dying blasphemies re-echo from the surrounding hills. He reaches the prostrate figure of Christ and gloats over his prey: he will overwhelm Him with mockery and scorn. At this moment the Saviour turns and casts on him the look with which he will judge the world. Instantly the fiend shrinks and sinks in blank amazement. He sees no longer heaven, nor earth, nor Christ. Scarce can he rally for headlong flight.

Even the debates, if we regard them as splendid pieces of lyrical invective, may obtain their meed of approbation. The best of them is the dispute in the Sanhedrim, when the perturbation of Caiaphas, the caution of Gamaliel, the charity of Nicodemus, and especially the ruthless hatred of Philo, would make a really powerful impression, were their harangues not quite so lengthy.

Many, too, of the phrases and similes have a true poetic ring. When Satan *pours* the evil dream into Judas' open ear, does it not suggest old Hamlet's tale how his brother "into the porches of his ear did pour the leperous distilment?" And the whole episode of this dream is one of Klopstock's triumphs. Satan appears, as Judas' dead father, to excite in him treasonous thoughts. He tells him that his Master neglects and despises him. He shows him the future Messianic Empire in all its splendour. Where the mountains ribbed with gold cast long shadows on the fertile vales, there shall John the beloved disciple be king. Peter shall reign over hills where vineyards are hanging, and boundless fields of waving corn. All round, in a smiling land, cities glitter in the sun, each like Jerusalem, daughter of the king; a new Jordan flows beneath stately arches, along lofty walls, and gardens gay with fruit reach down to the golden sands—these are the kingdoms of the other disciples. But far in the north lies a bleak region wild and barren, and hideous with withered shrubs; above are drizzly clouds, below are snow and ice. "That, O Judas!" cries the fiend, "that is thine inheritance. There, companioned by birds of night, shalt thou wander alone among the aged oaks, while the other disciples smile in happy scorn."

It is in such passages as these, that afford scope for musical rhetoric, that Klopstock is at his best. It is a pity they are so scarce. They occur once or twice in the *Messiah*, in the dramas hardly ever. These last effusions are indeed hopelessly dull. I have already alluded to his

northern *bardiettes*. His sacred dramas are even poorer, and may be dismissed with a sentence: they are merely over-grown lyrics. The first and best of them, *Adam's Death*, deals with the mystery of death as it is first seen to approach, not at the beck of a murderer, but in the common course of things, and though monotonous, does not fail to impress. These dramas, however, are chiefly famous because of the evil fashion they introduced among the poetasters of Germany. For a few years every man who could versify, Wieland among them, and many who could not, seemed to study the genealogical chapters of Scripture for the purpose of weaving tragedies about the obscurest names. In the same way, the *Messiah* called forth a swarm of epics that were no more epical and far less lyrical than itself.

Klopstock's prevailing character then is vehement, high-strung enthusiasm. And it was well for reviving German literature that its first flight should be so bold and lofty. It soared at once beyond the "arrows, views, and shouts" of the profane Philistines. In his poem of the *Two Muses*, Klopstock proclaims at once that no cheap triumph will suffice him. The young untried Muse of Germany disdains contest save with her victorious sister of Britain. They prepare for the race—

The herald sounds; they sped with eagle flight,

Behind them into clouds the dust was tossed:

I looked; but when the oaks were passed, my sight

In dimness of the dust was lost.

Whatever we may think of the contest, we must grant that Klopstock restored German art to life and liberty. He himself revelled in this strange freedom, and abandoned himself to the guidance of his feelings. Probably this was necessary for the reformation of poetry, but it had its dangers. Klopstock's warmth of emotional raptures was wholly religious, but there were not wanting prophets of woe who foretold its issue in something very different. And they were right. It is proverbial that extremes meet. The excess of pietism swings round into an excess of frivolity. Both are the outcome of feeling and sensibility rather than of character, both look more to personal enjoyment than to a practical end. Klopstock himself was preserved from this transition by his priest-like purity and narrowness. But the logic of history made it necessary, nor is it to be considered merely a relapse. His overcharged religion and stilted diction need their supplement in an elegant style, and a gay graceful wisdom of the world. So in the fulness of days the spirit of Klopstock, who has been called the German Milton, moved and fulfilled itself, and assumed a new form in Wieland, who has been called the German Voltaire.

M. W. M. C.

Plea for Musicians.

I HAVE before me an impression of Hogarth's "Grub Street." How well the woes of the poor author are told! A sense of aspiration disappointed pervades the apartment. The milk-woman clamours for money, the baby wails for milk, in vain; the cat and kitten, trespassing in search of warmth on their master's coat, will shortly be turned off with ignominy; the dog, who is making free with the scanty viands reserved for a future meal, will be discovered; and so on, down to the poor poet, who,

Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound,
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
Then writ and floundered on in mere despair.

Such were, such are, the woes of undiscovered authorship; and the world sympathises. But there is another class of composer, whose ranks are crowded with indigent members similarly endeavouring to subsist on a barren imagination—I allude to musicians. No Hogarth has delineated their griefs; it has been reserved, I believe, for melodramatists of recent years in rambles after fresh subjects to paint mixed pictures of their absurdities and sufferings. The world has no sympathy with them; and what is the reason of her insensibility? Is she not grateful to them for the many hours of happiness they have afforded her? How could she give her evening parties without Signor Rimbombo and Herr von Strom, whose joint efforts create a satisfactory emulation amongst the voices of the conversationists?

The world has no gratitude; no memory for ought but disagreeables. And yet I know not why one should speak of her so hardly, making her, as it were, the scapegoat of individuals—so meek and unrevengeful as she is too. I suppose the cause is cowardice; a collective hatred, too, has all the relish without the bitter after-taste of a personal animosity. But to continue. The world hates all musicians because they make a noise. She classes them with German bands, barrel-organs, paper-boys, old-clothes-men, the irrepressible sparrow, the matutinal quack of the park-haunting duck and the town-bred chanticleer, who, by crowing throughout the night, forfeits his only claim to respect. Musicians violate the peace of the domestic hearth; their art is an obtrusive one. The poet who recites his verses and tears his hair is not, though his ravings equal those of the Cumean Sibyl, as a rule, audible through that razor-like partition which, as in Swedenborg's other world, separates many a heaven and hell; but the abortive efforts of the tyro-musician

cannot be restrained by the thickest and hardest of walls. Shut the window and door, the detestable flat notes drift down the chimney with perplexing perseverance. Do what you will, short of stopping your ears with wax, you cannot escape those unsirenish sounds. The only resource left to you is to fly to your piano—I don't ask if you have one—has a prize-fighter fists? did Fitzgerald possess a pair of pistols?—to fly to your piano and revenge yourself on your unoffending neighbour on the other side. Thus the musician is not only the direct means of destroying other people's comfort, but is indirectly the author of multitudinous evils, and consequently an object of universal execration. Would not the composer of *Home, Sweet Home*, whoever he may be, turn in his grave if he knew that his innocent composition was daily torturing the most Christian souls into mingled thoughts of hatred and revenge. The Persians have doubtless lived to curse that king who, in mistaken kindness, when he saw his subjects dancing without music, introduced 12,000 musicians and singers from abroad.

Yet no one will say roundly that he hates music. "Are you fond of music?" you ask your partner in the mazy waltz. "Very," she replies with a look of rapture; "but," she adds, "I don't care for Mozart, Händel, Beethoven," &c. One of England's wisest men is devoted to music, but *dislikes all compositions in the minor*.

Music is like the quack panacea for all ailments, to which, if it be successful, each attributes a particular virtue. "Ah! it may not be of any use in cases of pericarditis or acute mania, but it has often saved me from a fit of gout. Jim, you know, takes it for the hiccough." Music is the good fairy of our childhood, in whose basket is something good for every good boy. *Il Barbiere* for me; the *Eroica* symphony for you. It is not her fault that we little boys will quarrel as to which gift is the best, and abuse the donor.

The many-sidedness of music makes her many enemies. That which pleases everybody delights nobody; and music, like everything else, has points that invite criticism. London walls are not built to withstand the battery of sound with which they are so often assailed. Hence the surly attitude of the householder, enhanced, no doubt, by British idiosyncrasies. "An Englishman's house is his castle" is a favourite English proverb, a typical "John-Bull-itude." The blessings of privacy are little understood in southern climates, where the necessity of a house as a shelter from the elements is not so imperative. A well-known artist, travelling in the south of Italy, had occasion to make lively protestation against an ancient sow for a bedfellow, and he subsequently heard the natives exclaiming among themselves, "Son matti! son matti! tutti gli Inglesi son matti." We Englishmen resent the slightest circumstance which forces us to acknowledge ourselves as part of the community; and there is no more forcible reminder, except perhaps a summons to serve on a grand jury, that such is our position, than the impertinent intrusion of the music of our neighbours. The faintest sound that penetrates the

sacred *paries* we regard as violating our national privilege. We harden our hearts against it. We blunt our æsthetic sensibilities. We have a stereotyped formula to express our opinion of all music so heard. It is execrable. I once had lodgings next door to a famous tenor. I thought he sang atrociously; and it was only when I found out who he was that I was obliged to recognise in him the artist who had so often entranced me at the opera. We are, in fact, like dogs—dogs in the manger—who howl at all music alike, good and bad. True it is we are not always so fortunate. True it is that the vicinity of the ambitious amateur is not to be coveted—nay, hardly to be borne.

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory.

But if those voices be *not* soft, and if those concords be discords, the vibrations of which the memory is sensible are more pronounced, more prolonged. We mark our disapprobation of the noise-loving qualities of Frenchmen by calling them "our lively neighbours," but if we apply these words to "the people next door" it is with a ghastly facetiousness that masks a world of concentrated spite and hoarded venom appalling in these days of civilisation. We are shocked at the immodesty that causes them to give publicity to their abortive efforts. We cannot understand their want of consideration for the feelings and comfort of others; we fail to imagine how they can derive enjoyment from such ill-assorted harmony (!); we are at a loss to comprehend why their common sense does not step in and put a check upon them. Our dilemma is excusable, and the horns of it are wide apart and grievously pointed.

My facetious friend T. H. says that every man, when he is under an arch, thinks he can sing; echo is the cause of many a self-admiration. Now there are people who are born, who spend their existences, under an arch—a moral arch, I mean. To them, if their bent be musical, crescendos and diminuendos are fantastic adornments, time an unnecessary restriction, semitones needless refinements. They thump, they bang, they bellow, they roar, they shout, they scream, they squeal. But to them the meanest, the most erratic, sound they make is better than heaven's sweetest music. It is trying to listen to the facile, well-connected amateur who dashes off a *pot-pourri* of the popular airs of the day. It is trying to detect the laboured efforts of the humble, untiring, untalented student, who is ever striving, ever failing, to attain the correct rendering of a well-known classical composition. But, reader, have you ever lived next door to a family of orthodox ladies who every afternoon sing a selection of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, artfully so contrived that there is at least one note in each tune half a tone beyond the compass of the performer's voice? Why is it—I submit it to you—why is it that all musicians, good as well as bad, are prouder of their extreme notes than of any other portion of their voice? Why should the bass be ever strug-

gling to perform feats natural to the tenor? why should the soprano be constantly endeavouring to commit larceny on the property of the contralto?

Is it because the result attained, though perchance unsatisfactory to others, is endeared to the performer by reason of the difficulty of the undertaking? Is this why these sorry sounds are prized as things of beauty, the more precious because they cannot last for ever? Perhaps! But I think a deeper moral truth is here involved.

Gentle friend, have you ever been stirred into consciousness in the early morning, when the fires are unlit, when the housemaid is in bed, when the winter snow is on the ground, and the east wind is howling unreasonable retribution—by the sounds of the piano? Has the citadel of your slumber ever been thus rudely assaulted by the scaling ladders of perversely laborious young ladies? If not, you have not known regret. Young ladies, I weep tears—no *crocodile* tears—over your *scales*.

Thou, wicked old creature, with thy fallow notes, thy withered legs, thy cracked voice, of what hours of misery, of what ghastly profanities, of what needless chilblains hast thou not been the cause? Picture me, reader, as I lie in bed, thus bereft of two hours of blissful forgetfulness. "The people next door"—that is to say, that portion of the people next door in whom I am so painfully interested, consist of five young ladies ranging from twelve years of age to twenty—"sweet and twenty," it is called—all immolating themselves on the altar of fashion, striving to be musical. They succeed each other, for to each is allotted a certain period of antepandial martyrdom. As there are family characteristics in voice, in figure, in face, so are there in music. I have heard of a self-made man, who purchased a nobleman's castle in the north, and employed a skilled painter to construct him a gallery of ancestors, in which his plebeian bottled-nose was palpably deduced, through a hundred nicely modulated gradations, from the delicate aquiline that came over with the Conqueror. A similar study is now presented to me, not in noses, but in ears; here are five young ladies all playing in succession the first movement of the Moonlight Sonata, with a stress of varying degrees of diabolicity on the last note of each triplet. There is some interest in the subject, but it is soon exhausted. This species of torture is enhanced when the torturer is scientific. I was calling the other day on some friends who have the impudence to imagine that living in a flat is the secret of true comfort. I found them in the wildest despair. I asked "why?" They only answered, "Listen." I listened. Overhead was a piano. They told me it was *tenanted*—I say tenanted, because I fancy the piano was of more importance to its owner than the room in which it stood—it was tenanted by an operatic composer. He was rehearsing a storm. "Tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—rom! pom!" There was no mistake about its being a storm, and what a storm it was! If I thought the composer was in any way attempting to be faithful to nature I would not visit even Paris again. I have since come to the conclusion that he must have

studied meteorology, and in theory only. The hero was probably a meteorologist gone mad, that is, one who had over-meteorologised himself. An ideal or complete storm was visiting him in his dreams; a storm with fixtures; a storm with all possible accessories; a storm with frightful, unheard of, auxiliary occurrences. Such a storm in fact as would have effectually prevented *Aeneas* from *eating his tables*—such a storm as Walt Whitman would delight to catalogue:—

I hear the so-ho of the sailors and the creaking of the chain that uplifts the anchor:
I hear the squelch of the billows on the gunwale:
I hear the cheery champing of hungry jaws at dinner:
I hear and rejoice;
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I hear in the morning at breakfast the champing of jaws diminish:
I hear the angry warnings of the rising gale:
I hear the mutterings of the animated ocean:
I hear and fear, for am not I part of them and they of me?

I appreciate the bravado of the captain:
I appreciate the sang-froid of the officers:
I appreciate the futile questionings of the anxious passengers.
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I fear the whirlwind, the whirlpool, the tornado, the simoom, and the scirocco:
I fear likewise the thunder and the lightning.
I fear the plagues of Egypt.
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I listen to the creaking of the straining cordage:
I listen to the orders of the captain amid the overbearing din of the tempest;
I listen to the clatter of the axes and the crashing fall of the mainmast:
I listen to the thud of the keel on the shingle:
I listen to the unbounded licence of the crew:
I listen to the screaming of the affrighted passengers:
I listen to the awful *ultimate* silence.
For is *that* not part of me and I of *that*?

So did we listen perforce, and we wished it had been. He pauses breathless. We congratulate ourselves that Providence has placed limits to human exertion even in moments of the wildest inspiration. Silence at last! But no! tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—rom! pom! Another storm is brewing. I bid my friends farewell and return home—I confess it—to speculate on the enormous advantages that would accrue to mankind if operas could dispense with composition. But was I right thus to give way to irritability? Let me calculate the comparative importance of my discomfort and my musical friend's unpleasant undertaking! Am I penning an epic that will eclipse *Paradise Lost*? Am I writing a history that will outdo Macaulay? Or rather, do I think I am? Then let me use all my endeavours to suppress my tuneless neighbour. I fear, however, that it is only when I am idle that I find time to grumble, or that there is ought to grumble at.

Most of us run in a groove and make ourselves very unpleasant if that groove is not well oiled for us ; and thus it comes that the minor calamities of life constitute its real unhappiness, just as the little unexpected pleasures furnish the chief contribution to its happiness. After all, we are little better than children to whom the divine justice of nature has decreed that so many sugar-plums entail so much castor-oil. Therefore let us not repine if the permission to sleep in a warm, soft bed is qualified with a seasoning of adjacent discords.

We tolerate infancy, let us be charitable to infant musicians. We gloze over that period of our children's lives when their existence is a hideous nightmare—a constant alternation of famine and surfeit ; when the wail of inanition follows hard upon the stertorous breathing of repletion, for the sake partly of the sudden random gleam of inner light that breaks from them, and reminds us of the great Anti-Darwin. But, to make prose of one of England's most beautiful poems, an admixture of the world's baser influence is necessary to utilise the divine essence of man. Experience teaches expression, though in that expression the subtler, ethereal quality of the mind becomes for the most part bewildered into commonplace. Divine wisdom must conform to the rules of grammar and the coarse sounds of current speech : so must the harmony of Apollo himself be thrust through the straitened mould of chromatic scales and made to thread the intricacies of counterpoint.

Therefore grumble not, O hardened unsympathetic Londoner, if thy morning slumbers be broken by the shriek of the fiddle, or the shrill pertinacity of the flute. You cannot, of course, bring yourself to believe that futile attempts to master a simple theme may be the untutored stammering of a soul bursting with music, whose lot perhaps in some future day, in some future world, will be to entrance his thousands, even as Israfil holds spell-bound the denizens of Paradise with the music of his heart-strings. This, you say, is hard to believe ; therefore let me put another picture before you !

The scene is a garret ; it is a bitter winter's day ; the wind howls around and enters through a hundred crevices ; an ember or two smoulders on the hearth. At a rickety table, huddled up into the corner in a vain attempt to elude the network of draughts which intersect the apartment, sits, lost in his work, the young musician. He has just completed the score of his symphony ; it is his first. Smaller works he has done, and has tried in vain to get them performed ; but this is that work which will make him famous for centuries to come. Perhaps it is the last thing he will ever do. Pinched by famine, benumbed with cold, he has, sown in his veins, the seeds of a fatal disease. He has just finished his score, which he regards with admiration. He has no doubts of its success. He turns to the beginning, hums the theme, gets more and more excited, rises to his feet, and seizes the crutch on which he drags himself to the nearest eating-house when he has money for a meal. He fancies himself in the National Concert Hall. Thousands of eager

spectators throng that vast auditorium behind him. He hears the hum of expectancy. He gives the signal. The muted violins whisper forth the air; the basses and the 'cellos give it body; it develops; the brass contributes a mellow fulness; a running wave-like accompaniment is heard from the harp; the whole body of instruments is now at work. "Crescendo!" The action of the young composer's arm becomes animated. The time is quickened. Faster! Faster! The movement is reaching a climax. "Forte! forte! più! più! fortissimo!" There peals forth a tremendous unison. But no! poor soul, there is no answer to his call but the trembling of the crazy boards on which he sways his feeble frame. There are no thousands in whose hearts he can raise a kindred glow of emotion. That symphony, too, like his other works, will decay unknown in the closet. He sinks into his chair in a passion of weeping.

No doubt he is one of those whose efforts at composition, before he was forced to sell his piano, have educed many a muttered oath from his luckless neighbours. But he is a man of a great soul and a noble useful life.

You deny; you disbelieve. You deny the utility of a life that achieves nought but disappointment. Reader, the fame of many a contemporary is built on *such* disappointments—the disappointments of others. You disbelieve that the history I have sketched is possible in these days of enterprising managers, of universal good taste, of charity organisations. Reader, the world is a wide world, and there is many a dreary spot in it. You ask: "Why does he waste his time and his life in seeking after the unattainable?" You hate the pride that spurns what you call "a useful life." You would have him scrape the fiddle in a music-hall. You would wish him to dance attendance in the schoolrooms of the rich. But you forget that where nature bestows fine brains she seldom adds a broad back. You forget that the subtle imagination of the artist may be blighted in the tussle with mechanical routine and enforced inferiority. And yet you doubtless have friends whose existences have been embittered by the impossibility of exercising a fancied creative power, but to whom the necessity for bread has appeared paramount. Our poor friend did not so regard that necessity; and seeing the alternative, there is much to be said for his way of thinking. I beg pardon, I have unwittingly become serious.

Hogarth, I said, had not represented the woes of musicians—I meant the woes of unrecognised musical talent. His picture of the "Enraged Musician" portrays the outrage of musical sensibility. The ear that has, by long use, become accustomed only to sweet concordance, feels acutely the babel of that barbarous serenade. The sufferings of the "Enraged Musician" are our own intensified. It never, I confess, occurred to me till the other day that a musician who had thus suffered might mentally transfer his martyrdom to his neighbour, and thus become so struck with the brutalities he is committing as to desist altogether from music. This

possibility suggested itself to me while reading Mr. Schuyler's interesting book on Turkestan. There appears to exist among the Tartars a refinement of feeling not credited to European votaries of harmony. Mr. Schuyler will doubtless pardon me for not quoting the anecdote *verbatim*: as certain variations of language are necessary to elucidate the meaning which I attach to the fable.

Its hero was a local saint, Khorkhut by name, whose stature, fourteen feet, made him an object of some eminence in the country. He was fond of music and had a desire to learn to play upon the lute. Accordingly, being of a sensitive temperament himself, and knowing of what discomfort to others are the ill-harmonies evoked by the unskilled hand, he unselfishly withdrew to the edge of the world in order to complete his musical education. In this hope, however, he was disappointed. Visited one night by a dream, he thought he saw some men digging a grave. "For whom is that grave?" he asked. "For Khorkhut," they replied. He awoke, and the result of this short but plainly-pointed conversation was that he speedily removed his abiding-place. So hasty determination, so evident a care for life, may strike the reader as inconsistent with that strength of character which marks every truly great man. A word about this hereafter. From the edge of the world Khorkhut now removes to its eastern corner. No rest, however, can this giant son of harmony find here. The same vision again assails him and with the same results. Now he pitches his tent on the western corner; now on the northern; now on the southern; but all in vain. At length it dawned upon him that his only resource was to try the centre of the world; and he consequently encamped upon the banks of the Syr-Daria, which, as every well-informed person knows, is the centre of the world. But alas! there too these hideous phantoms pursued him. "Must I," he cried in piteous lamentation, "must I then resign all hope of being able to discourse with thee, O lute, O mistress, in that sweet language which thou alone understandest? Ye Gods, if there be any pity in Heaven," he continued (unconsciously quoting *Æneas's* stock phrase), "have mercy on your hapless slave, who, after all, only wants to learn to play upon the lute." Then seeing the dark waters of the Syr-Daria rolling beneath, and despairing of pity, he cast his mantle on the stream and himself on the mantle. But, wonderful to relate, those murky waters did not engulf him. He floated, and there, in this unassailable position, he found peace at length. He played his lute; he played it for a hundred years; and then he died. The manner or the cause of his death has not been transmitted to us. It must ever remain a mystery whether his passion for the lute was the secret of his longevity; or whether, had he been no musician, and lived like other folk, he might not have attained to even a greater age. Perhaps the mere fact of having so completely his own way delayed the process of natural decay. But, be that as it may, the issue is foreign to our subject.

The question which now concerns us is why was Khorkhut sainted? In some rustic European calendars we find such undeserving saints as Pilate and his wife; but the Easterns have generally some sufficient reason for their canonisations. Of his pedigree we know nothing; we may conclude therefore that the dignity was not hereditary. Stature is a sign of distinction in the East, but it is an attribute of devils as well as heroes. Thus we may conjecture that his sainthood was conferred on him for some such reason as the following. He was a man who lived a long life with a distinct object in view, and, despite the difficulties thrown in his way, at last attained that object. These difficulties were aggravated—1, by the fact of his enormous stature which rendered his proceedings a matter of general notoriety; 2, because of his extremely sensitive nature, which did not allow him to interfere with the comfort of his fellows; for the nightmares, which haunted him, were nothing but the reproaches of his unselfish conscience. Once, however, in the midst of the desolate flood of the Syr-Daria, he knew that he was at length alone, and could learn how to unburden his music-laden soul without annoyance to any one. These are nice points of feeling to be commemorated by barbarian Tartars, say you. Timour was a Tartar; and the reasons he alleged for conquest were substantially the same as those now put forward by Christian Russia.

Music is a physical necessity for certain people. No one will be inclined to doubt this who has been at the university, and heard the simultaneous burst of melody which arises the very instant that the clock marks the hour when the authority of learning is placed in abeyance and music sways the alternating sceptre. Thus, without doubt, there are many of us whom delicacy of feeling prevents from seeking to express our thoughts in harmony, herded together, as we are, in the metropolis, and since, unlike Khorkhut, we cannot play nomad.

Half of us thrive on noise, and the other half cannot subsist without absolute quiet. What, then, can be done? Can we, like the reverse of a solution I once heard of the poor-rate difficulty in London, namely, to surround each rich man's house with a circle of squalid hovels—can we banish all pianos and such like inventions of the evil one to one quarter of London? Imagine, if you can, the difficulties of this! And if it were accomplished, imagine the rivalry that would spring up between the musical and the non-musical members of the community.* Our boasted London would then be little better than the Indian village of which Sir William Sleeman writes, where there are two Mahommedan parties, who celebrate their religion, one in silence, the other to the sound of the tom-tom. (N.B. I should think the quietists would ultimately adopt the rival mode of worship.)

* Victor Hugo evidently imagines that some such division of London was necessitated by the bitterness of party-feeling there, when he defines "le West-end" as "partie occidentale de Londres habitée par les Tors."

I know of no remedy for this state of affairs. To me the problem appears insoluble. But let us not sit with folded hands! There is a palliative which suggests itself to me—a medicine prescribed by the most famous physicians—a medicine easy of application, but difficult to meet with. It is *charity*.

Do I doctor myself with the medicine I prescribe to others? you ask; or am I a musician and thus plead the cause of my profession?

Between ourselves, dear reader, neither is the case. I certainly do not practise what I preach, but being capable of some sort of studied noise which the lenient might possibly recognise as music, I am thus in a position to exercise the "*lex talionis*," which I do rigidly,—"*an eye for an eye*," a headache for a headache. For further particulars inquire next door.

L. T.

A Pilgrimage to Vallauris.

MANY years ago I happened one afternoon to be strolling up the High Street in Oxford—*sicut meus est mos*—when my attention was attracted by a few earthenware vases and ornaments in the windows of Spiers's well-known fancy-shop, nearly opposite the twisted columns which support Archbishop Laud's rococo portal to St. Mary's. I had never before seen any other pottery exactly like them. They consisted of a plain glazed olive-green ware, of very simple but beautiful shapes, with no ugly knobs or excrescences, no tawdry painted figures, no meretricious addition of any sort which could distract the eye from the graceful curves of their swelling outline. Their forms were modelled upon classical patterns, reproduced with exquisite taste in a colour and material which completely harmonised with the original conception. I went in to ask the price. They were marvels of cheapness, as it seemed to me then. Those were the early days of the æsthetic revival, when we had not yet grown accustomed to have beautiful things brought within the reach of modest purses; and I hailed the new earthenware with joy and congratulation. Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Morris, and a hundred other teachers had long been preaching to us that what we wanted was not more pictures and more statues, but higher and better taste in simple everyday articles; and here was the very thing we had all been looking for in vain. The shopman told me the new ware came from "some place called Valery, in France," but nearer than that decidedly vague address he could not get. I thought at first they must be made at one of my two old Channel haunts, St. Valery-sur-Somme or St. Valery-en-Caux; but I soon learnt that they were really of Provençal workmanship, and that the place where they were manufactured was Vallauris, near the wilderness of modern villas which still bears its strangely inappropriate village name of Cannes. No matter what the new vases might be called, however, I was not long in making up my mind that they were genuinely beautiful and commendable works of art.

Of course I bought a small selection of the pretty vases, and introduced them eagerly to the acquaintance of all friends interested in æsthetic matters. Very soon the consignment was sold out, and new consignments came over to replace it. Oxford is a capital centre for propagandism, since the men take back new ideas with them to homes in every part of England; and perhaps the little stock of crockery in the window in High Street played its modest part in helping on the great artistic movement which has since declared itself so clearly amongst us. Naturally it did not do all the work, even as regarded Vallauris ware;

for when I went up to town, a few days later, I found that the same pottery had already broken out over all Bond Street, and had made its way into more than one household where I happened to call. Indeed, it seemed to have taken everybody's fancy as much as it had taken my own. Nevertheless, from that day to this, I have always felt a sort of proprietary interest in Vallauris ware, as though I had discovered and introduced it entirely on my own account, and I have never missed an opportunity of saying a good word on its behalf in speech or print. Accordingly, happening to find myself and my encumbrances, a short time since, in some lovely spring weather at Cannes, I held it a bounden duty to drive over one bright day and inspect the works at Vallauris. So many people have now learnt to admire the Vallauris pottery that they may perhaps, be not wholly uninterested in learning something about the manner of our visit.

We started at ten o'clock, on a glorious Provençal February morning, from the new marble statue in the Square Brougham. Cannes has already performed the apotheosis of Lord Brougham, and I am convinced that only the unfortunate fact of his having been an Anglican in religion has prevented the population from making him into a saint outright. As it is they are obliged to content themselves with a Brougham statue, a Brougham bust, a Cours Brougham, and a Brougham portrait in every shop. Last year they gave a Brougham fête, while this year every passenger at the railway station is vociferously requested to invest a franc in a *Hymne à Lord Brougham*. And, indeed, Cannes has good reason to be satisfied with her relations to the English Lord Chancellor; for his example has turned the town, from a mere fishing village with a lovely situation, into the brightest, prettiest, and most expensive of the Mediterranean winter resorts. Villas and gardens now line the shore in unbroken order for five miles together, where only forty years ago a few hundred fishermen dwelt in the tortuous and dirty lanes clustered on a lone hill-side about the little church and mouldering castle which once protected their remote ancestors from the frequent attacks of the Barbary pirates.

The drive to Vallauris is alone worth the trouble of a visit to Cannes, even if one had not the artistic treat of the potteries before one's eye as the end and goal of the day's excursion. Passing through the long and handsome street of shops which lines the Route d'Italie for the first two miles, we emerge at length upon the road to Nice, with its lovely ornamental grounds and quaint villas. The houses themselves, which stud the hill-side in every direction, are pretty, for the most part, rather in spite of than because of their architecture. Here a Russian prince has built himself a magnificent palace, a sort of southern Kremlin, bristling with domes, and pinnacles, and gilded minarets; there an English manufacturer has planted a modern Gothic castle, constructed of dark red porphyry blocks, with heavy square towers and machicolated battlements; a little farther a Parisian actress has retired to the rural

shades of a Swiss chalet in gilt gingerbread ; and beyond again a wealthy French journalist has erected a huge Italian villa in that ornate and over-decorated style which I can only describe as the Haussmann order of architecture. This Haussmann order is the prime favourite with moneyed people all along the Riviera, and it can best be realised by remembering its chief example, the new Opera House in Paris. It crops up again in all the splendid but tasteless mansions which line the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and it reappears once more, whiter, brighter, and more fantastic than ever, in the hotels at Cannes, the club houses at Nice, and the great gambling casino at Monte Carlo. On the Mediterranean shore, however, the style becomes almost pretty by the contrast between its pure white stone—Baron Haussmann boasted that, like Augustus at Rome, he found Paris of brick and left it, if not of marble, at least of freestone—and the exquisite blues and greens of the sea and foliage. Indeed, the whole effect of all the villas scattered about the hills of Cannes is singularly brilliant and beautiful. Many of them are in themselves extremely tasteful, and all of them are redeemed by the massive foliage, the clear blue southern sky, and, above all, the exquisite lawns and gardens by which they are surrounded. Slopes of smooth English greensward, dotted about with fan palms, date trees, and tropical plants, run down from the houses to the roadside, every gateway opening up to one's delighted eyes a fresh glimpse into some little earthly paradise of flower-beds and shrubberies. Close to the walls or railings, and hanging over within reach of the passing carriages, the slender drooping foliage and golden-tufted blossoms of the mimosa form, every here and there, thick glowing masses of exquisite bloom. One road at Cannes, a perfect mine of these golden tufts, bears the quaintly allusive name of California. No other tree, that I know of, stands out from top to bottom so unbroken a phalanx of serried gold. Even the long tresses of our own lovely laburnums must yield to the mimosa both in richness of colour and in wealth of blossom. Oranges hanging everywhere among the dark, glossy green foliage give a tinge to more than one Villa des Hespérides. Here and there, too, a wild spray of pinky-white flowering almond, standing out, twin-forked, in bold relief against the retiring blue-green background of the sky near the horizon, suggested forcibly to our minds, as we passed, the original hint from which Japanese ceramic artists must have borrowed the first idea for some of their boldest and happiest designs.

Some way beyond the outskirts of the town, but still within the region of lawns, and orange groves, and suburban cottages, the road ascends a hill overlooking Golfe Jouan, and brings one full in view of the sea, the winding coast, and the great chain of the Maritime Alps. Away in the distance the jagged peaks of the snowy range stand out in virgin white against the deep blue of the cloudless sky. The snow lies thick upon their crests and low down their sides throughout the winter months, so that they rise like a single icy sierra above the green lower ridge of the nearest hills, which hide the limits of the snow line and so

immensely increase the beauty of the picture. In the foreground the land trends gracefully round in a hundred great arcs and undulations, first to the jutting promontory of Antibes, crowned by the ancient chapel of Notre Dame de Garoupe; then, with a wider sweep, to the white streets of Nice and the tall lighthouse of Villefranche; finally, beyond the great mountain barrier of the Turbia, along whose ledges the Corniche road winds its sinuous way towards Genoa, to the long and dim foreland on whose seaward extremity we can just descry the sunlit houses of Bordighera. To every curve of the coast answers a sister curve of glassy bay, "the peacock's neck in hue," dotted here and there with deep russet sails. As we gaze upon the alternating belts of lighter and darker blue which chase one another along the indentations of this fair Hellenic shore—for Nice and Antibes, Nicaea and Antipolis, are themselves the last outposts of that indomitably free Phœcean colony of Marseille, made familiar to us all by the glorious story in Herodotus—we cannot fail to recall the long lilt of Mr. Swinburne's lines concerning Aphrodite in the *Hymn to Proserpine*:

And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays.

Surely, if we may judge by the zones of exquisite colour that fleck the liquid sapphire before us, the foot of Aphrodite herself must have lightly skimmed the "viewless way" that leads from the farthest Hellenic port of Massalia to that basking rock on the dim horizon where the "lone-dwelling Heracles" of the old Ionian merchantmen, the solitary tutelary god of a tiny isolated Hellas, surrounded by wild Ligurian mountaineers, has given his poetical name to the Portus Herculis Monœci, the little modern principality of sea-girt Monaco.

Looking backward towards Cannes and the Provençal coast, the view is scarcely less lovely than that towards the Genoese Riviera. Close at hand the little Iles de Lérins stretch before us, separated by a narrow strait from the low headland of La Croisette. On the nearer of the two islets which make up the tiny archipelago—the Ile Ste. Marguerite—that impenetrable mystery whom we call the Man with the Iron Mask dragged out seventeen years of his lifelong imprisonment. It was here, too, that Marshal Bazaine effected his little romance of modern life by escaping from the just fate which should overtake a traitor to his country in its darkest day. Yet I must confess, if I had to be imprisoned anywhere, I should much prefer the Ile Ste. Marguerite, with its huge, shield-like umbrella-pines and its glorious mountain views, to sharing the cells of Dartmoor or Portland with the "unfortunate nobleman" of our own island. The second of the little group, the Ile St. Honorat, contains the sadly desecrated ruins of an ancient monastery, utterly destroyed under pretence of restoration by a body of Vandals in a modern Cistercian dress, but still noteworthy as the school from which went forth a host of famous men in early Christian days—St. Lupus of Troyes, who

checked the onward swoop of Attila ; Salvian, the preacher whose jeremiads have revealed to us the crumbling state of Gaul at the date when the great wave of Teutonic conquest swept over the provinces ; and that now half-mythical name which vaguely clothes the genuine personality of a real missionary monk, St. Patrick of Ireland. On the farthest point we can just catch a glimpse of one massive square tower, crowned with heavy battlements, the *château fort* of the eleventh century, where the brethren took refuge in times of danger from the attacks of the Moorish pirates, or of those "belligerent Christians" whom they dreaded almost equally, the corsairs of the Genoese coast. Watch-towers from which the guard kept vigil day and night to warn the country-side of the approaching "Saracens" may still be seen capping many a tall bulwark of rock along the whole Ligurian and Provençal sea-board.

Still farther to the west, beyond that dark semicircle of ultramarine which we call the Gulf of La Napoule, rises in jagged and broken contour against the horizon the glorious sky-line of the Esterel hills. They seem a painter's range rather than an earthly reality, so wonderfully varied and twisted and indented are their fantastic bluffs and pinnacles. The bright red porphyry which forms their mass is overgrown on its lower slopes by a green carpet of pines and cork oaks ; but on all the summits the rock crops boldly out in splendid and beautiful points or needles, rising a hundred feet and over sheer into the sky, and contrasting wonderfully in their full, rich, ruddy hue with the canopy of verdure at their feet. Fancy runs wild and revels in their strange shapes. Here a great dragon rears his red crested head above the sea, and trails his sinuous body, covered with sheeny green, far to the landward, till his forked and blood-red tail rises again in some distant pinnacle of the looming background. There, again, a monstrous whale basks at huge length in the sunshine by the fretted shore. I have never seen elsewhere such wild variety of form and outline, not even among the tossed and crumpled hills of the Jamaican highlands. The slow action of the raindrops and the torrents has carved and scored the hard-grained porphyry into a thousand fanciful caprices with a supple cunning which the hand of man could never equal. No wonder that the first requisite of every villa at Cannes should consist in an unobstructed view over the ever-shifting shadows which dapple the broken ranges of the Esterel. When the afternoon sun lights them up with a liquid haze of pink and purple light, they look like some misty dream of Turner's rather than a solid block of earthly mountains.

At Golfe Jouan we leave the main route along the coast, and turn up a side road by the valley of a little mountain stream. Strange to say, the stream has actually water in it—a rare luxury in this thirsty land of Provence ; for most of the Provençal rivers are mere dry torrents, whose beds consist of rock-strewn gulleys on the mountain-sides. Even the greater watercourses, like the Var, except in flood time, have only a few yards of running stream in the centre of a great pebbly waste ; while the

Durance itself, that mighty river, up the banks of whose swollen flood we have all followed Hannibal in our school days, Livy in hand, resolves itself on personal acquaintance into a narrow, shifting belt of aimless water, which has lost its way about the middle of a hapless desert some mile or so in width. But the little brook by whose side we journey up to Vallauris resembles rather one of our own Cumbrian becks, running in tiny stickles and smooth reaches at the bottom of a deep and smiling dell. Here and there, as we mount, it tumbles over a ledge with a fall which almost deserves to be called a cascade. A landscape without water, says some one, is like the human face without the eye; and the parallel clings in one's memory by its strict applicability. This little dale up which we are winding, an oasis in the dry limestone hills, was the Golden Valley, the Vallis Aurea of the Romans, which soft Provençal lips have clipped into the pretty modern name of Vallauris. On either side the limestone cliffs rise a few hundred feet above the beck, their bare white rocks starred with pink and purple anemonies peeping out among the stunted fir-trees; for the great umbrella pines which justly form the chief glory of Cannes—huge bosses of thick spreading verdure, supported high aloft on tall and gracefully tapering russet boles—for the most part raise their stately canopies on the low, sandy plain and shifting dunes to eastward, between the English quarter and the water-fretted cliffs of the Esterel. We pass on the left a little Devil's Bridge (apparently a single Roman arch on the vicinal road which ascended the valley from the Via Aurelia, to judge by the similarity between its rugged masonry and the square blocks in the mouldering amphitheatre at Fréjus), superseded by two successively more modern structures, one by its side, and another, still newer, a little way farther up the stream; and then a turn of the way at the top of the valley brings us suddenly after a steep climb into the village of Vallauris itself.

Vallauris town, like Vallauris dale, has a decidedly un-Provençal look. Its regular, straight streets and open places suggest rather a modern industrial village than an ancient bourg of more than Roman antiquity. Most of the old towns on the Riviera were perched on almost inaccessible peaks of rock, so that the women and children might be as safe as possible from the kidnapping hands of those ubiquitous Moors who seem everywhere to form the *raison d'être* for every curious social feature of the northern Mediterranean shores. Just in this portion of the coast especially the infidels were above all to be dreaded; for they had firmly established themselves about Hyères and St. Tropez, during the ninth and tenth centuries, in the range of pine-clad hills which still so strangely recall their name, the Montagnes des Maures. Starting from their stronghold of the Garde-Freinet, in the midst of that rugged country, they planted many little Mohammedan colonies all along the coast; and at Cannes itself, built into a modern wall, you may still see the last relic of some forgotten mosque in the shape of a single neglected minaret, crowned to our own times by the tiny gallery where the muez-

zin daily called the faithful to worship at the stated hours of Moslem prayer. Under the influence of these frequent visits from the Moors the Christian coastmen regularly perched their villages—mere tortuous labyrinths of crowded alleys—under the shadow of a great castle on some steep crest of strongly scarped rock. Such is the old town of Hyères; such is Bormes, and Grasse, and Cagnes; such, above all, is that strange and mouldering eagle's nest of Eza, a hamlet picturesquely clinging to the very topmost cone of a great brown sugar-loaf, rising in solitary isolation four hundred feet high, on which one looks down with wonder across three deep and dark gorges from the highest ledge of the Corniche at Turbia. But Vallauris had the good luck, as it ultimately turns out, to be utterly destroyed at the end of the fourteenth century; and when, more than a hundred years later, a good monk of Lérins—one of the great house of Lascaris—rebuilt the village in the Golden Valley, he was able to neglect the dismal precautions of the Middle Ages, and give his new town the regular and rectangular ground-plan of an American city. So it happens that modern Vallauris looks as open and cleanly as if one had fallen upon it the midst of who'some Guelderland itself.

We drive up through the little village square, and across a broad courtyard, to the door of the famous pottery which we have come especially to visit. You enter into a large show-room, with vases and tazzas arranged all round the walls and on the centre tables, in a perfect embarrassment of lovely forms. The first three minutes can only be given over to delight and admiration, and they may be summed up in a prolonged chorus of Ohs. "What a lovely jar!" "Did you ever see anything so exquisite as that *jardinière*?" "Do just look here at this delicious little pipkin!" And so on through all the gamut of ecstasy, from the tiniest little olive-green flower-holder for a humble cottage to the vast Pompeian vases which might stand in the hall of Mr. Alma Tadema's Roman grandees. But after the first flush of delightful excitement at the sight of so much beauty has passed away, one can gaze round a little more calmly, and take in the various details of the scene with a more critical eye.

At many factories of the sort the visitor is handed over at once to the guidance of a regular cicerone, from whom he may pick up piecemeal such scraps of information as are vouchsafed to the general public by the proprietor; but at Vallauris one is allowed to wander at one's own sweet will through the show-rooms and works, and need not be troubled, unless one wishes it especially, by any communication with the employés. Specimens of all the pottery made in the establishment are exhibited in the rooms, with the prices marked in plain figures; and, if you like, you can select your own patterns for yourself, lay them aside upon a little table, and make up the total on your own account. So we were glad at first to make acquaintance with all the lovely things we saw about us in this quiet manner, and only troubled the few people we found in the rooms whenever we actually wanted a piece of information. We were the first

visitors of the day, having started early on purpose—for in the afternoon all fashionable Cannes comes out to stare at the vases—and no more notice was taken of our presence than if we had not been in the place at all. For those who really wish to study the pottery such freedom from supervision is particularly pleasant. You do not feel compelled to buy everything that you look at, nor to abstain from looking at a shape that pleases you because you are not going to buy it. So we took advantage of our liberty to the fullest degree.

After a while, however, M. Clément Massier, the proprietor, noticing, I suppose, from our questions that we took a deeper interest in the pottery than the average run of visitors, kindly came up and gave us a full account of the origin and growth of his establishment, and many other matters connected with the manufacture. From time immemorial, it seems, the making of pottery has been the staple industry of Vallauris. Antique tiles and fragments of finer workmanship may still be found scattered by thousands on the level space behind the village, known as *les Incourdoures*, which doubtless marks the site of the old Gallo-Roman oppidum. At the present day, besides M. Massier's artistic works, the place contains no less than seventy common pottery factories; and we saw coarse bowls and pipkins by the hundred drying in the sun as we drove up the main street. Perhaps it was the presence of the Roman remains of *les Incourdoures* at his very door which first set the founder of the artistic Vallauris ware thinking of the possibility of bringing home keramic art to the houses of the people. Some antique lamp or vase, picked up, as they often are, among the vineyards and olive groves, may have given the prime hint to the new manufacture. At any rate, some twenty years since M. Massier bethought him of adding a new branch to the common pottery trade in which he had been brought up. He produced a few simple and gracefully shaped pieces after ancient models, and the experiment succeeded to admiration. As visitors from the growing town of Cannes began to buy his pretty ware he waxed more adventurous. He sought out Greek, Roman, and Etruscan models of a higher type. Then a journey into Italy became necessary; so M. Massier started off to go the round of the Italian museums on his artistic quest. At Rome, Florence, Bologna, Turin, he picked up many hints; but it was in the inexhaustible Museo Borbonico at Naples, among the rich treasures disenhumed from the ashes and lava of Pompeii, that he found the larger number of his choicest patterns. Returning to Vallauris, provided with casts and drawings—and the notes with which he has kindly furnished me show what a wonderful power he possesses of knocking off the idea of a vase with a few strokes in a thumb-nail sketch—he set to work to reproduce his Etruscan or Pompeian prototypes "in a commercial spirit." His aim was to popularise ancient art; and he has certainly carried his point. "As Cannes grew," he said to me, "we grew with it. Visitors took back our pottery to every part of Europe; and others who saw it there admired and bought. *C'est l'art mis à la portée de tout le monde.*"

At first the Vallauris manufacture had two great defects. For one point, it did not ring when struck; and for another, it did not hold water. I remember well how disappointed we were when we bought our first lot of slender olive-green and pale yellow vases, light jugs with curling handles, like those from which the Hebe of Hellenic gems pours out the nectar for Zeus, and attempted to arrange a few white jonquils and golden daffodils against the dark green of the vase; but, to our grief, we found the surface all crusted next morning by a white clinging efflorescence, which the water had brought through and deposited on the outside. Moreover, the material was painfully fragile. Even with our own careful dusting the handles of a semi-Egyptian cup "came off in our hands," as the housemaids say, after a most annoying fashion, especially as we had no one but ourselves to scold for it. But numerous experiments have at last succeeded in remedying all these defects, and the ware is now technically perfect. It rings, when struck, with a note clear and resonant as bell-metal; it resists breakage as successfully as the best Japanese pottery; and it holds water without difficulty, of which fact I have at this moment ocular demonstration, as I am writing with a duplicate bunch of jonquils and daffodils before my eyes, arranged in still lovelier contrast with a certain dark green Trojan vase, where faint wave-lines of black are shot between the sombre ground-colour in a wonderful fashion, of which I shall have more to say hereafter.

These Trojan shapes, which have only recently been added to the stock, are among the loveliest and simplest of all. They are copied from the patterns which Dr. Schliemann unearthed at Troy, and they possess some points of superiority even to the Greek and Pompeian models. Many of them are suggestions from gourds and other natural vegetable forms. A couple of years since I had critically studied the Schliemann collection in the South Kensington Museum for a day or two, in connexion with a subject on which I was then engaged; and so I was able readily to recognise a Trojan as soon as I saw it. Even in the originals themselves, buried as they had been for ages under the prehistoric ruins of Ilium, and crusted with the concreted clay of fifty centuries, one could not but admire the exquisite simplicity and effectiveness of the primitive forms. Reproduced, however, in exact imitation of shape, with the delicate tones and shades of Vallauris superadded, they were quite surprisingly lovely. Here was a little tripod, a sort of miniature cauldron supported on three tiny feet, the very embodiment of simple grace. Here again was a flask of perfect proportions, speaking out in mute language the delicate yet all-unconscious taste of some prehistoric potter. And here once more was a quaintly beautiful jug, formed by a careless twirl or two of the primæval wheel, and marked for all its ornament with the staring eyes and curved beak of the owl-faced goddess Athene. How strange it seems that these old half-mythical Trojans should have produced shapes five thousand years ago which still astonish us in this

too conscious nineteenth century by their native elegance and their unpremeditated taste.

With increased prosperity and popularity the Vallauris works have gone on to higher, or at least to more ambitious flights. They have taken to manufacturing large and handsome garden vases and flower-stands, stately ornaments for halls or vestibules, and magnificent decorative bas-reliefs for wealthy houses. Some of these are from antique models, while others are from designs specially prepared by well-known French artists. They are in their way very handsome and splendid objects, and, considering their size and workmanship, are marvels of cheapness—as, indeed, is everything about the place. Yet, to my mind, the simple and graceful little vases and pipkins with which Vallauris started are more intrinsically pleasing than these costlier and larger modern additions. Perhaps it is well that each man should most admire what comes best within the reach of his own particular purse; and if I had a house in Mayfair I have no doubt I might fancy some of the splendid moulded tazzas on great tripod stands, which would fitly decorate my drawing-room; but, as matters now stand, I must confess to a more special delight in the little Trojan cruse or Etruscan beaker which I can buy for no greater expenditure than a couple of francs. Without detracting from the beauty of the larger objects, it seems to me the special merit of Vallauris that it has brought lovely shapes and exquisite colours within the range of even the most modest purse.

I have often asked myself, What is the peculiar nature of the sense of beauty which we derive from the sight of these Vallauris vases? Perhaps it may resolve itself into only two main elements—the beauty of colour and the beauty of form. And it is this very simplicity, this purity of design, which lends them all their charm. If we look at a common English earthenware vase, disfigured by knobby excrescences in the shape of handles, and covered by bright red and yellow flowers, we see at once that it has no beauty of form worth speaking of, and that what little it has is masked and overlaid by the painted design. The coloured figures distract our attention from the general curves of the outline to their own particular shapes. But when, as with the old style of Vallauris vases, the colouring is uniform throughout, and is also quiet and retiring in tone, we do not find our thoughts distracted from the beauty of form by the conflicting claims of a painted pattern. Now, beauty of form is certainly a higher mode of æsthetic pleasure than beauty of colour; and in this deliberate sacrifice of the lower to the higher feeling we get the secret of that sense of purity which we instinctively attach to these lovely shapes. We all feel the truth of this analysis in the case of sculpture. A pure white marble statue is a far higher art product than a coloured Dresden statuette. Even the tinted Venus, lovely as it undoubtedly was, seemed to me, and probably to most others who looked at it with a critical eye, a sacrifice of the purer beauty of form to the less pure beauty of colour. There is a figure of a dog in the South

Kensington Museum to which Mr. Ruskin attaches a quite special importance as a model of all that is false in art. This dog is sculptured in black and white marble, the black and white portions respectively answering to the spots on the original animal. To those who have seen the figure in question further criticism is unnecessary.

In a statue we get form in one of its purest embodiments. Nevertheless, even there it is not form, pure and simple, but human form, that we admire. And, to my mind, those statues most truly attain the ideal excellence of sculpture which give us only a single perfect human figure in isolation. Composition introduces a certain element of plot—tells a certain story, so to speak—and thus interferes with the one central beauty of shape. Moreover, each form then partly interrupts and hides the other. Hence I personally prefer an Apollo or a Venus to a Laocoon or an Antigone. Again, for the same reason, nude figures are far more statuesque than draped; and if we admit drapery at all, it must be of the sort which suggests and develops, rather than that which conceals or cramps, the limbs beneath, or else we degenerate at last into those monstrosities in frock-coats and trousers which our modern sculptors are compelled to produce to order for the dubious decoration of our manufacturing towns. Now, the antique vase gives us beauty of form in another mode; not human or animal, but almost absolute. Its curves and swelling outlines are in themselves beautiful, and need conform to no other rules than those of the absolute beauty; whereas human forms are bound down to certain special applications of the absolutely beautiful lines, in accordance with the organic laws of the human figure. Hence I am not sure that in pottery we do not get the very purest mode of beauty of form, though of course in the case of sculpture a thousand connected emotions of the human heart are roused as they can never be roused by the dead clay of the potter. The face and bust of a Clytie can awake a thrill on many a subtle chord which no deft combination of simple curves and colours could ever touch.

For somewhat similar reasons I like best, myself, those little simple vases which trust entirely for their effect to a few well-marked strokes of outline, rather than those moulded shapes which contain figures in relief, disturbing, to my mind, the singleness and unity of the composition. Yet each type has doubtless beauties of its own. The plain rounded bowls, and jugs, and amphoræ have simplicity to recommend them. In others a touch of quaintness is added by a few slight indentations, made by pressing the thumb into the moist clay on the wheel. Here a fanciful air is given by undulating the lip; there more grace is thrown into the sweeping bend of the twin handles. Triplets break the monotony in one; a careless side twist gives a tone of freedom to another. All these types are turned on the wheel, and so modelled by the hand alone; those which are moulded in casts, and afterwards retouched by the graver, being less spontaneous, please my fancy less. But even these are lovely after their kind, the feeling of *richness* replacing that of *simplicity*. It

is this element of richness which gives their special beauty to most Renaissance works and to much Oriental and Mauresque decoration. I am sorry to say, however, the ornate types seem greater favourites with the English public than those purer and more graceful models by which Vallauris first gained its artistic name. Our national taste runs too much towards the seemingly costly to appreciate thoroughly a style whose simplicity is its greatest charm.

Another point which doubtless tells half unconsciously in our minds in favour of the Vallauris shapes is their distinct flavour of the antique. We love each little vase the better because we know it is Trojan, or Etruscan, or Hellenic, and because we recognise in it a form which we associate with all that is sacred to us in ancient art. Beautiful in themselves, they become more beautiful to our minds by their suggestion of a dim antiquity and their relation to our cherished stories of Italy and free Hellas, the mother of all our arts.

At the same time the colour of the Vallauris ware gives it a point of advantage which is all its own. The forms we had already, if only in museums and art treasures; but the colours are something entirely new and very beautiful. Being uniform, they do not interfere with the appreciation of the shapes; and they are dexterously chosen in the most exquisite and dainty tones, which harmonise admirably with the nature of the designs. The two earliest colours—the well-known olive-green and tawny umber yellow—were slightly adapted, I think, from the common native glaze of the country; for I have seen ordinary jars and saucepans of very similar hue, only cruder in tint and wanting the one touch of art, hanging up outside shops in all the little villages of Provence, from Nice to Toulon. But other and still more perfect hues have since been introduced, most of them in the same subdued tone as the original colours, though even more artistic in effect. The latest introduction is rather different in kind, a pale and somewhat sickly turquoise blue, yet not without a certain meretricious prettiness of its own. This turquoise blue is a great favourite with our countrymen, to please whose fancy it has been adopted, "for we must allow that you other English, as a rule," says M. Massier with a deprecating smile, "have very bad taste in the matter of colours." Still the blue, though on a different line from the other shades, is lovely in its own way. It would look beautiful as a foil to the lurid purple blossoms and the dark green foliage of those graceful fritillaries which every Oxford-man has picked by handfuls in the marshy meadows around Iffley lock. But the finest colour of all is the dark green shot with black, to which I have already alluded, and which really approaches the limit of perfection. The trick of shooting the glaze in this way was discovered by accident, and forms a trade secret; but the Japanese visitors, who saw the ware at the Paris Exhibition in 1878, knew the secret, and told M. Massier at once how it was managed. Of course, as always happens with our latest European inventions, the method had been practised in Japan from time immemorial.

These colours, it seems to me, have two chief points of attraction. The first is their delicacy—that is to say, the absence of all coarse or excessive stimulation. What we call a *crude* colour is really one that stimulates us more than enough, just as the boom of a drum does when compared with the note of a violin. The second point is their novelty. We like change, and change in moderation is good and healthy for us.

Unfortunately, the general market is sure in the long run to effect some deterioration in the artistic quality of the goods offered to it, even if it only succeeds in spoiling a few special types to gratify its own palate. The blue Flemish jugs which we all so much admire were beautiful enough in the old days; but cheap modern imitations, in coarse and badly glazed stone ware, have vulgarised the style, till now even the genuine originals hardly look as beautiful in our eyes as formerly. So, too, the European market is rapidly debasing the exquisite colour-taste of the Japanese, the delicate tracery of the chased Benares ware, and the admirable harmony of Persian tile-work. Something of the same sort has unhappily befallen one or two specimens of Vallauris pottery. I am sorry to say that the manufacturers have been forced to paint by hand bunches of flowers and little enamelled swallows on many of their vases. The public *will* have them, and it must be satisfied. The flowers and figures are very well painted, and are excellent examples of their own kind, but they are certainly a desecration of the simple old Vallauris style. M. Massier himself, who has a most refined and cultured taste, does not care for them; yet he cannot but make what the world asks of him. I hope in future all buyers of Vallauris ware will compare the plain and the figured specimens before they decide upon their purchases. If they really prefer the painted vases, of course they must buy them; but I believe a few minutes' reflection would often turn the scale in favour of the purer taste.

From the show-rooms we passed to the works, where we fortunately obtained the guidance of a very intelligent and artistically-minded workman. This portion of the establishment is extremely interesting to those who are fond of ceramic art as a hobby and understand it technically, but it does not contain much which would long detain the general public. So I shall not keep you many minutes engaged upon the mysteries of clays and pastes, of enamels and firing, but shall only tell you the two or three simple points which are likely to strike the non-technical mind.

The Vallauris clay is very tractable and plastic, and is mixed in varying proportions of material, according to the work in hand. Most of the ordinary patterns are produced on the potter's wheel, that most primitive of all human machines, which still maintains its place unaltered in our midst. The workman who fashioned an imitation Trojan vase as a specimen before our eyes worked in the very self-same manner as the original artist who wrought the prime model in the ancient and pre-historic city which lies in ruins far beneath even the half-mythical relics of Priam's palace itself. The clay is first well kneaded with the hand,

till it looks like a lump of dough, and is then placed on the rotating wheel. As it turns around, the potter models the plastic mass in his hands, coaxing it out here and pressing it in there. The mouldings on the vase are mostly made by the simple use of the finger-nail, which is more sensitive, and so more trustworthy, than any other implement. For the finer mouldings, however, a small piece of metal is employed—price one sou. During the modelling the material is kept very moist, and it answers so wonderfully to the manipulation of the workman that one can readily understand the meaning of that time-honoured Hebrew phrase "as clay in the hand of the potter." Not even molten glass seems so supple and obedient to the maker's will. When the modelling is finished, the superfluous moisture is scraped off by means of another and still more simple instrument of horn, valued at half a sou each. So it will be seen that the whole process of manufacture is about as primitive and uncostly as could be desired.

The more ambitious pieces are fashioned first in plaster-of-Paris casts, and afterwards have the marks of the cast removed by hand, and the delicate points of the design retouched with a graving knife. As to the colour, that is put on as a mineral enamel, which vitrifies in the firing and so forms a glaze. But some of the most beautiful specimens are only very partially glazed, and produce a pretty dulled appearance, not unlike that of "flatted" paint. The terra-cottas, of course, are not glazed at all; and I am rather surprised that some of the vases are not similarly produced in the plain baked clay, without enamel. Grubbing lately in the Roman ruins of Pomponiana, near Hyères, I was much struck by the beautiful effect of the finer unglazed pottery, whose fragments we found amongst the ancient dust-heaps, and it seemed to me that the Vallauris clay was quite good enough to bear comparison with them in the matter of grain, though doubtless it might be found wanting in impermeability.

At Cannes the same night we dreamt we were roaming for ever through a Paradise of crockery-ware, set in the midst of a great palm-shaded orange garden by the side of an endless and lawless deep blue lake. And so ended our first, but not, I trust, our last pilgrimage to Vallauris.

G. A.

Marius Bougeard's Amnesty.

THE STORY OF ONE GOOD TURN AND ANOTHER.

I.

MASTER PASCAL LEDOUX, barrister in the town of Ville-Aubry, sat one morning in his study and reflected on all that Providence had done for him. He was healthy, good-looking—at least no girl had ever shown him that she thought the contrary—he had a personable figure, and knew how to clothe it in shapely garments; he had money in the bank, a good practice, and he had lately been elected by his fellow-townsmen to a seat in their municipal council. To crown all, Master Pascal was betrothed to Mdlle. Rosalie Marsault, the only child of the richest notary in the town—a pretty girl whose small hands were to hold a dowry of three hundred thousand francs, to say nothing of those promissory notes on the future, which we call “expectations.”

“Well, now, really!” exclaimed Master Ledoux, as he mused upon these blessings; “I can’t say that Fortune has frowned upon me.” And he smiled. When a man indulges in such a grateful train of thought before he has accomplished half the journey of life, he may reasonably apprehend that the second half of his pilgrimage will not be so happy as the first. But our friend Ledoux was troubled with no misgivings of the kind. Sitting back in his chair and stroking his fresh-shaven chin, he thought complacently of all that he was going to do; and the while his honest round face—for he was plump and ruddy—beamed with an air of intense satisfaction.

“Let us see,” said he, spreading out the fat fingers of his left hand and checking off his calculations upon them. “With a hundred thousand francs of Rosalie’s dower I’ll buy an estate and a baronial château; the second hundred thousand I’ll invest; but with the third hundred thousand I’ll buy political influence and get elected member of Parliament. *Monsieur Pascal Ledoux, Député*: that will look well on my letters: then by-and-by, when I am forty, I’ll try for the Senate. Perhaps by that time I shall be a cabinet minister. *Son Excellence Monsieur Ledoux*! That has a nice sound. Why shouldn’t I become a cabinet minister, since so many other ninnies — I may even become President of the Republic. Aha-ha-ah! Everything is possible to a man whom Fortune aids.”

Honest Pascal Ledoux laughed broadly at the idea of coming to such high honours; but he was quite in earnest about his ambitious schemes. He had always been popular; even as a schoolboy and a student he

made new friends every day; and now he had reached a time of life when men begin to understand the value of being everywhere liked. Ledoux thirsted for popularity, because he had found the first tastes of it so sweet and fortifying. He rose and examined himself in the glass, just to see if he had the face of one born to august destinies. He thought he had. He glanced down his calves and liked the shape of them. He stretched forth his hand crying: "*Messieurs les Senateurs!*" as if he were haranguing his future colleagues, and he enjoyed the sound of his own voice. He was in the act of combing his hair with his fingers to see what style of head-dressing suited him best, when there was a ring at the door, and presently his future father-in-law, M. Marsault, the notary, walked in, hale and bluff.

"My dear Pascal," said the old gentleman, without preamble, "I've come to ask a favour of you. I want you to exert your influence to obtain the pardon of a transported Communist."

"Of half a dozen if you like," laughed Pascal, accommodating the notary with a seat near the fire.

"No, not of half a dozen: heaven forbid!" exclaimed M. Marsault, as he removed his gold spectacles and wiped them on the skirt of his coat. "The man whose pardon I want was, I think, unjustly condemned; his name is Marius Bougeard. Not euphonious names I admit, but then he had no hand in choosing them. He was accused of arson, murder, shooting, &c. in the civil war, and transported almost without a trial. He had first been sentenced to death, but he escaped execution by falling ill of the jaundice at about the time fixed for his despatch. I believe there was some question of shooting him in spite of his jaundice."

"Such savagery makes one's blood boil," ejaculated Ledoux, who had a tender heart which boiled easily.

"Well, I don't know that society would have missed Bougeard much if he had been shot," remarked the notary; "but since he is alive, and has suffered more than six years' exile, I think it is time that he should have his innocence established. At least such is the opinion of Rosalie, who is interesting herself in the case."

"Ah! it is Mdlle. Rosalie who——"

"Yes, my daughter has heard the story from Bougeard's mother, an old woman who keeps a lace-shop. Mdme. Bougeard has spoken so much about her son that Rosalie feels quite touched, and this morning she said to me: 'Papa, if M. Pascal wants to make me a wedding present, let it be Marius Bougeard's pardon. There is nothing I should like better than that.'"

"Such generosity honours Mdlle. Rosalie!" exclaimed Pascal Ledoux, wiping a drop of moisture from his eye; for, as above said, he was easily accessible to soft emotions.

"Well, come home to lunch," said the notary, rising, "and you shall hear the story from Lili's own lips. I confess—h'm—that I don't understand much of it, myself."

The two men went out together. The notary's house was close at hand—a big stone mansion with offices on the ground floor, and a large garden behind. In a capital such a residence would have been called a palace; as it was, M. Marsault could boast that he had the finest house in Ville-Aubry after the prefect's, and he used always to walk in it with his head erect as if the consciousness of this fact gave him great satisfaction. Leading his future son-in-law towards the garden, he called to Mlle. Rosalie, who was watering a bed of roses: "Hi, Lili, here's Pascal come to lunch with us, and he agrees to do all you wish."

Rosalie dropped her water-pot, and ran forward smiling. She was a really pretty girl with fair hair and blue eyes, who greeted the barrister without embarrassment, quite cordially, as if they were old friends: "Good morning, M. Ledoux. It's so kind to interest yourself in my *protégé*: but I'll show you his photograph, and you'll see what a nice young man he must have been. He has the most lovely dark curly hair and black eyes; and it seems he used to write verses, paint, sing, play, and dance all to perfection."

"That's his mother's account of him," interrupted the notary, drily.

"Oh, but, papa, it's everybody's account of him. Every one will tell you that M. Marius Bougeard would have become the pride of the town if it had not been for the malice of his enemies, who got him transported."

"Well, mademoiselle, I promise to do my best to procure the release of this fascinating creature," said Paul Ledoux, amused.

"Thanks; I'll tell you all about him at luncheon!" exclaimed the notary's daughter. "You'll see how unjustly treated he has been."

Pascal Ledoux was so desirous of being convinced that he listened with but half his usual common sense to the explanations which Rosalie presently vouchsafed. It did certainly strike him as odd that Marius Bougeard should have joined the Commune at all, and still more so that his detractors should have been able to prove before a court-martial that he had plundered certain houses, burned others, and caused hostages to be shot; but then the Commune was a mystery altogether, and nobody had yet been able to make out the rights or wrongs of it. So far as he was concerned, Pascal Ledoux was willing to take up Bougeard's cause, in the first place because Rosalie wanted him to do so; and in the next because the advocacy of a political convict's wrongs was likely to put him in excellent odour with the Liberal electors of Ville-Aubry. The "Amnesty Question" was just then beginning to agitate political circles in Paris; by making himself one of its champions in the provinces Pascal would make the best bid possible for Radical support at the next parliamentary election.

Accordingly, within twenty-four hours of his luncheon with M. Marsault, our friend had drawn up the "case" of Marius Bougeard in feeling language, and had sent it in the form of a letter to the editor of the *Trompette*, the local Liberal print, just by way of firing the first shot. The letter was much read and discussed in the town; but in the course

of a day or two Pascal received the visit of one M. Lesage, the oldest and wisest practitioner at the Bar, who shook his head at him and said: "My friend, you have nothing to do with getting a pardon for Marius Bougeard. The fellow was a scamp, who almost broke his mother's heart by his follies before he joined the Commune, and deserved shooting for his crimes. I am afraid you are being made the tool of some designing knaves."

"You are quite mistaken," answered Pascal, coldly. "It is my future father-in-law, M. Marsault, who has chiefly urged me to take this course."

"Well, then, just you listen to me, and beware of M. Marsault," said M. Lesage, laying a hand on Pascal's shoulder. "Oh, yes, you may start and feel furious against me for speaking against your future father-in-law, but it is as well that you should know the full truth before your marriage rather than have to discover it afterwards. M. Marsault is solicitor to a very wealthy old man in this town, named Benot, and it is pretty notorious that he has been holding all his client's scrip in his hands for years. Now Benot has two nephews: one the notary Grugy, who is your uncle's rival and greatest enemy; the other, this Marius Bougeard, who is in exile. Now assuming as I do that M. Marsault has been making rather a free use of Benot's money——"

"Sir, how dare you suppose such a thing?" interrupted Pascal.

"Well, I *do* suppose it on the faith of facts that have come to my knowledge," answered old Lesage, coolly; "and I add this, that it is M. Marsault's best interest to get M. Benot to leave all his property to Marius Bougeard sooner than to Grugy. The latter, when he came into old Benot's fortune, might ask M. Marsault for accounts which it would be disagreeable to furnish; whereas Marius Bougeard, if he owed his pardon to M. Marsault's intercession, and a fortune into the bargain, would not be disposed to look too closely into things. Now do you understand?"

"No, I don't," replied Pascal, hotly.

"Well, I pity you," said M. Lesage, amicably; "for I look upon you as a rising young man, and don't want to see you shove your head into a net."

"I consider that you have shamefully traduced M. Marsault, who is an honourable man," cried Pascal Ledoux.

"Good-morning then, but you will see in the end that I was right," responded M. Lesage.

II.

M. Lesage *was* in the right, and he had stated nothing untrue concerning M. Marsault, of whom circumstances had made a rogue. We say circumstances, because Nature had rather fashioned this lawyer for playing the part of an honest man than of a villain. He was grave, quiet, dis-

creet; he loved his ease; he had no extravagant taste, such as gambling, picture-buying, or china-fancying; he paid his taxes regularly, owed no tradesman money, and would have lived to the end of his days the most blameless life imaginable, had it not been for one ambition which he cherished—that of becoming rich.

A French notary stands in a position exceptionally favourable for speculating with other people's money. He is, in a manner, a Government official, as the number of notaries is limited, and their letters of appointment are all signed by Government. As a consequence, a notary inspires more confidence than an English solicitor. He is member of a corporation, who, from *esprit de corps*, feel bound to make good any losses that may be incurred by one of their number, so that a client has the certainty of knowing that if he is robbed by his notary, the Chamber of Notaries will pay him all his dues. Thus a Frenchman makes of a notary his confidant; he takes advice from him about his marriage; he gives him the title-deeds of his land, and puts into his keeping all his savings under the form of scrip. M. Marsault had in this way become possessed of all M. Benot's fortune, and had speculated with the same as he had done with the money of other clients, hoping that he might enrich himself without doing them any harm. Unfortunately his speculations had not always been successful, insomuch that he had felt compelled to exert all his influence on M. Benot in order that the latter might bequeath his wealth to Marius Bougeard, sooner than to the notary Grugy, who would quickly have made him—Marsault—feel very uncomfortable by looking too closely into his accounts. But Bougeard was in a penal colony; and it was necessary not only to bring him back pardoned, but likewise to convince M. Benot of his innocence, before the latter could be persuaded to acknowledge him as his heir. M. Benot was a meek little man, who had picked up his wealth in selling rabbit-skins. On some questions, however, he was more stubborn than most of the men who pass for obstinate, and certainly nothing could have induced him to leave his money to a revolutionary blackguard rightfully convicted of dishonesty.

That is why M. Marsault had finessed so adroitly in order to get Marius's case put into good hands; that is why he now began so instantly to urge upon Pascal Ledoux the necessity of acting, and talking with energy on behalf of the ex-Communist.

It was about a week after Ledoux had commenced his operations by writing letters to newspapers and to personages in high office, that the idea occurred to him of holding a grand amnesty meeting in a public edifice. To do this it was requisite to obtain the mayor's permission; but the mayor would not at first give it, apprehending disorderly scenes. Pascal referred to the Minister of the Interior, and after an exchange of letters which, on being printed in the papers, served greatly to advertise his name, he got the required leave, and announced the meeting to the world by means of flaming red posters thus worded:—

AMNESTY ! AMNESTY ! AMNESTY !

An Address on the cruel wrongs suffered by a fellow-townsmen of ours, the citizen Marius Bougeard, will be delivered by M. Pascal Ledoux and other patriots in the Theatre of Ville-Aubry, on Sunday next, at 2 P.M. A collection will be made at the doors on behalf of the exile ; and ten centimes admission money will be charged, also, for the exile's benefit.

Fellow-townsmen ! attend in a body !

Pascal Ledoux was surprised at the mass of people which this invitation drew on the appointed day ; but he was soon able to perceive that the sentiments of this mob were not unanimous. As soon as the theatre doors were open they rushed in helter-skelter, and presently began to fight over the question as to whether Marius Bougeard was a martyr or a scamp. Many who had known him declined to talk of him otherwise than as an ill-conditioned vagabond of the worst type, and this naturally incensed the enthusiasts on the other side. These proved to be in a majority, and they favoured Pascal Ledoux with a tremendous acclamation when he marched upon the stage of the theatre in a swallow-tail coat and white tie to deliver his address.

Standing at a small table, Pascal had behind him the members of the local Amnesty Commission—an unwashed crew—whilst in the stage box to his right he saw his pretty betrothed Rosalie seated between her father and old M. Benot. This sight was enough to string all the chords of Pascal's eloquence. After commencing with a touching narrative of the convict's early career (narrative occasionally interrupted by cat-calls), he broke out into indignant rebuke of the persons who denied Bougeard's claims to political saintship. "I declare to you all," he bawled, "that when this man comes back he will become the glory of our town."

"Bosh ! you'll be too happy to give him a wide berth." (This from an impatient listener.)

"I shan't give him a wide berth. My house shall be open to him at all times."

"Well, then, he'll borrow money of you, and eat out your larder."

"I don't care for that, sir."

"He'll drink up your wines."

"He shall be free to drink, and the more the better."

"He'll oust you from your seat in the town council, you'll see."

"Gentlemen, I profess I am not ambitious."

"Well, then, he'll take away your bride from you and marry her himself, dower and all."

This last shaft disconcerted Pascal, because it made everybody laugh. Mlle. Marsault was seen to be in the stage box, and the audience gave her a cheer ; but some were ungallant enough to hiss and to mew. The poor girl, red with confusion, cast an appealing look at Pascal to curtail his remarks. He was about to comply rather reluctantly—for he was as full of steam as a kettle—when an unforeseen incident occurred. A telegraph boy suddenly appeared on the stage, and handed Pascal

a message. Amid general silence the latter broke the envelope, and cried: "Victory, my friends—victory! The Government has yielded. Just listen to this: '*The Minister of the Interior informs M. Ledoux that Marius Bougeard is included in the amnesty of two hundred convicts which the President of the Republic signed to-day.*'"

"Bravo! *Vive la République!*" shouted most of the audience, carried away by this unexpected news.

"I congratulate this meeting upon the moral effect of their demonstration," sang out Pascal, quite excited.

"No, no, it is all your doing!" chorused the audience. "*Vive Ledoux!* Hurrah for the friend of the downtrodden! Hurrah for the Commune!"

Amid extraordinary commotion the meeting broke up, and Pascal hurried round to meet Rosalie as she was coming out of the theatre, and to receive her felicitations. A glance from her brimming eyes and a squeeze from her tiny hand rewarded him amply.

"You spoke nobly, M. Ledoux," said she—"and now when will this poor young man be home?"

"Oh, in about six weeks or two months, I suppose."

"Not till then?—not till six weeks? Oh, what a cruel time it will be to wait!"

"But why are you so anxious to see the man?" asked Ledoux, rather astonished.

"Oh, I was only thinking of his poor mother!" answered Rosalie, faltering.

But she blushed deeply as she said this, and honest Pascal Ledoux could not help thinking her a very philanthropical young lady; indeed, all the more so when, on the next day, she timidly slipped a hundred franc note into his hand, and begged him to accept it for the subscription that was being raised to furnish the ex-Communist with a little purse of money on his way home.

III.

It has been said that old M. Benot, the rabbit-skin seller, was a meek man; but this did not make him insensible to personal glory. He was much flattered by the laudatory terms in which Pascal Ledoux had spoken of his nephew Marius Bougeard, and his heart warmed towards the castaway, whom he had never till then befriended in any way. The notary Grugy, his other heir, heard this and took alarm. He began collecting proofs of Marius's past iniquities—the debts he had contracted and left unpaid, the many pranks and follies he had committed, and so forth; and he proceeded to send anonymous letters daily to old M. Benot, warning him of what a graceless scamp his nephew was. Old Benot did not altogether credit these communications, but they ended by making him uncomfortable. He went one morning and sought the

notary Marsault, whom he found closeted with Pascal Ledoux, and he laid before them the heap of papers he had received.

"Those are from Grugy!" exclaimed Marsault at once. "He has disguised his hand; but I know it all the same."

"It's very base of him to traduce Marius in this way," grumbled old Benot; "but I used to think Grugy such a truthful man: are you sure there is no warranty for these accusations of his?"

"Why, would you believe an envious rogue who is simply afraid that you will disinherit him? If I were ten years younger, I would go and tweak Grugy by the nose, and force him to retract these unmanly accusations against my *protégé*, or else I would oblige him to come out and fight me."

"I will take this course," ejaculated Pascal Ledoux, stoutly. "After all I have said in Marius's favour, I consider the poor fellow to be in some sense under my protection, until he comes back to France, and can take care of himself. I'll go and see Grugy this minute."

"Don't be too rash!" exclaimed M. Marsault; though he was delighted to see Pascal act with such spirit, because he saw what a good effect it produced on old Benot's mind.

Pascal Ledoux was about thirty years old, and the notary Grugy was forty, so that there was no such disproportion between their ages as made it impossible they should meet in duel. Grugy, though no lion, was the first to propose a mortal combat; for he was exasperated to think that old Benot's fortune was slipping out of his reach, and he accused Ledoux of being the chief author of his troubles. Ledoux, on paying his visit, had expected to encounter a timid, conscience-stricken person, whom he could browbeat: he found a defiant churl, who snarled like a bull-dog: "Yes, I did send those anonymous letters," barked he; "what of it? If you feel offended, send me your two seconds, and we'll fight till one of us falls."

"All right," said Ledoux; "I'll take you at your word. You and others must be taught that the man who insults Marius Bougeard puts a deadly affront on me."

"If that's the case, you had better pay your friend's debts; that will be a first step towards whitewashing his reputation. Good-morning now, and send me your seconds as soon as you like."

It was arranged by-and-by that the two champions should meet at eight o'clock the next morning, with pistols. In the meantime Ledoux reflected that Marius Bougeard's debts ought certainly to be paid, and he managed to get a list of them from the exile's mother. That old lady, who kept a lace-shop, professed herself to be unable to pay; but, as the bills scarcely amounted to three thousand francs in all, the good-natured Pascal devoted this afternoon to going about the town and settling them. "Marius can repay me by-and-by, when he comes into Benot's fortune," mused he; "the main point for the present is that his name shall be freed from stain."

In accordance with this object, Pascal met the notary Grugy at the appointed hour next day, and the two exchanged shots. Pascal's bullet lodged in the notary's collar-bone and smashed it; but Grugy's bullet, whisking past Pascal's face, which was half turned, carried away a part of his nose. The gallant lawyer was disfigured—not irretrievably, but in such wise at least that the full beauty of his nasal organ could never more be restored. He had a prescience of this as he left the battle-field, but he consoled himself by reflecting that the fair sex never look unkindly on the scars obtained in doughty combat. Rosalie had often told him, with a sigh, that she wished the days of sword-wearing would come back, and that gallants would fight oftener for their lady loves.

Nevertheless, Pascal Ledoux went home to bed, and did not think it prudent to leave his house until his nose should have been healed, so far as was feasible, in order to be in a presentable condition. Before this consummation was attained twenty days had elapsed; and the hero, for whom Pascal had bled—Marius Bougeard—had at last returned to Ville-Aubry.

IV.

Pascal was the first to hear of his sudden arrival. He was seated at his bed-room window, in the twilight of an autumn evening, ruefully examining his deformed nose in a mirror, and wondering whether the missing quarter-inch of it could be artificially supplied, when his servant abruptly threw open the door and announced in bated breath—"M. Marius Bougeard."

A nasty-looking little man—unwashed, unshaved, unkempt, and smelling of spirits—shambled into the room. His clothes were greasy and almost in rags: his linen was foul, and had never been starched: the fellow looked so utterly mean and hideous altogether, that Pascal, who had imagined the ex-Communist to be an Adonis, remained staring at him with his mouth wide open, unable to articulate.

"What? are you Marius Bougeard?" he inquired at last.

"Yes, sir; I'm the man," whined the returned convict.

"Are you sure that you are the one we were expecting? Perhaps there were two Bougeards in New Caledonia?"

"No, sir; I'm the only one—the native of Ville-Aubry; the patriot whose release was obtained by your kindly intercession."

"Ah, well, come to my arms then!" cried the good-hearted Ledoux, who began to feel compassion for the sorry plight of the exile. "Allow me to embrace you fraternally. There! My poor fellow, how much you must have suffered! Sit down and tell me all about it; and first, how comes it that you arrive in this sudden way? We had intended to give you a grand reception. I was going to make you a speech of welcome."

"I should like some refreshment before speaking," faltered Bougeard, "for I have scarcely eaten since yesterday. The Government has behaved vilely to me."

The poor fellow looked, in truth, as if he were half famished. Pascal, whose pity for him increased every moment, rang the bell and ordered that some dinner should be fetched him from the restaurant. Meanwhile a bottle of wine was brought up, and the Communist, having tossed off a few glasses, felt revived, and was enabled to give an account of himself. He explained that he had been bundled on board a convict ship without knowing whether he had been pardoned or not; and that on his arrival at Toulon he had been consigned to the police, who informed him that he was amnestied, but that he must beware of creating any disturbance. A small town of Provence was assigned him for his residence, and he was ordered to report himself at the police office once a week, being warned that in case of non-compliance he would be packed off to New Caledonia again without ceremony. By the time Marius Bougeard had got to this point in his recital, dinner was brought in, and his mouth became closed for a time. But Pascal was indignant at all that he had just heard, and paced the room in agitation.

"Police—reporting—packed off to New Caledonia again! I never heard of such a thing!" he cried, with that snuffle which had become his habitual intonation since the accident to his nose. "Why, the police have been imposing upon you. You are amnestied, and cannot be required to report yourself."

"So I thought, sir," grumbled Marius humbly, with his mouth full.

"Ah, but we'll see you righted!" continued Pascal, raising his voice. "We'll rouse public opinion in your favour. You mustn't be balked of your public reception. Why, a banquet was going to be given in your honour, with the mayor presiding."

"A banquet to me?" ejaculated the ex-convict, looking as if he thought his interlocutor mad.

"Yes; a banquet with speeches, and a regular Republican demonstration. And you shall have it, I promise. Meanwhile you had better sleep here to-night. Shall I send and tell your mother that you have arrived?"

"No—o; I think I had rather wait till to-morrow," replied Marius, with some alacrity.

"Yes, perhaps you had better. To-morrow morning, when you have sufficiently rested, we'll send you the tailor, hosier, barber; and you'll look a different man. There, take another glass of wine, and then you'll have some coffee and a cigar, won't you, before going to bed?"

Pascal Ledoux did the honours of his abode as if he were entertaining a prince. He gave Marius so much wine that this patriot became fuddled, and tottered to bed somewhat unsteadily. Whilst undressing he hiccupped the *Marseillaise*, and as soon as he was between the sheets called for a glass of grog by way of nightcap. This potent beverage, however, did not send him at once to sleep; and the ex-Communist lay on his back for at least an hour marvelling by what turn of fortune it

was that he was going to be welcomed back as a hero into the land whence he had been driven forth as an outcast.

"I wonder who that chap Ledoux is?" he mused, hazily. "I don't remember knowing him when I was a boy; yet they tell me he had the chief hand in getting my pardon. An ugly fellow anyhow, with that broken nose of his. I wonder whether I shall be able to screw a few hundred francs out of him for pocket-money to-morrow. He looks fool enough for anything."

And with this grateful reflection towards his benefactor the returned Communist fell asleep.

V.

No faculty is so common in man as that of being able to accommodate oneself without difficulty to good fortune. Marius Bougeard had been living for six years the life of a common-law convict; for he had been sentenced as a murderer and incendiary, not as a mere rebel, and this had entailed his wearing the prison dress and crop, and having a chain fastened to his ankle. His diet had been beans, his occupation hard labour, and he had once been flogged with a rope's end for trying to escape. All this had not fattened him nor improved his appearance generally. He returned to France lean as a scarecrow, and with all the spirit apparently crushed out of him, for he felt like a criminal, and looked so.

Even after he had been shaved, trimmed, and reclothed, thanks to Pascal's good offices, he did not at once appear at his ease, though conscious that he had recovered some of his good looks. He stared at himself awkwardly in the glass; he glanced nervously towards the door every time he heard a footstep, as if fearful that the police were coming to fetch him. His nervousness was such that Pascal Ledoux could not help noticing it; and slapped him on the back, bidding him be of good cheer, and remember that he must hold his head high as martyr to a great cause. A glass or two of white wine served the purpose of exhilaration better than these exhortations, and sent Marius into the street with the bold front which beseems an innocent, ill-used man. But it was not until he had been actually acclaimed in the open air and embraced by the public authorities, that he plucked up heart and began to comprehend his new destinies.

Pascal Ledoux, walking arm-in-arm with him, took him to the principal civilian café in Ville-Aubry—that which the barristers and merchants frequented. A report of their intended arrival had got bruited, and the place was crowded, so was the street outside. A loud cheer was set up as the pair clove their way through the throng, and on entering the café they were received with a storm of applause, stamping of feet, banging of hats, and cries of "*Vive la Commune!*" Let it be noted that among the gentlemen who thus acclaimed the returned convict there were many who had felt for the Commune, at the time

when it was raging, only the sincerest loathing. But Frenchmen are swift to forget; and things that seemed hideous in 1871 had, through the glamour of political illusion, altered their complexion considerably some years later. Marius Bougeard was hailed as the representative of an idea that "vexed Government"—as an "Oppositionist" and member of the "coming phalanx" of politicians; and this would have been enough to ensure him a hearty reception in any circle of ambitious Republicans. Now in this café there were briefless barristers, fee-less doctors, adventurers, journalists—all the men, in short, who form the fringe of the Radical party everywhere. Marius Bougeard had at least this point of superiority over them all—that he had already made himself a "name;" a thing which they were in vain trying to do in their respective walks.

So champagne was uncorked in his honour, and when the foaming glasses had gone round a loud cry was raised for the Communist to climb on a table and make a speech. Elated by the wine he had drunk, Marius complied, and shrieked: "Citizens, this is the proudest day of my life. I thank you for having done justice to my Republican sentiments, and for having understood that persecution could not quench them. I am as warm a supporter of the Red flag now as ever I was; and I trust that the day may not be far distant when we Communists shall have our *revanche* for all we suffered in New Caledonia!"

He went on rambling for a quarter of an hour longer in the above style—this man who a few weeks previously had dragged himself at the feet of the Governor of New Caledonia screaming that if mercy were shown him he would thenceforth live a loyal, law-abiding life. He said such wild things that Pascal Ledoux, who did not wish himself to be reckoned as a Communist, tugged impatiently at his coat-tails. Marius paid no attention. Pascal tugged harder, and the Communist turned short round: "What does that man with the broken nose want?"

"Why, it's Pascal Ledoux," cried several voices, amidst astonished laughter.

"Ledoux? I don't know him!" exclaimed the inebriate orator. "At least, yes; isn't he the man who—who was—m—my friend?"

"Yes, and who gave half his nose for you."

"How—how did he g—give half his nose for me? I didn't w—want his nose—just explain."

"Never mind," faltered poor Pascal, red with confusion; and he whispered in the rogue's ear: "Just come along with me, or the police may be taking you. You are going too far."

"I don't care a pin for the police," drawled Marius, striking a defiant attitude; and, this sentiment having elicited some bravoos, he cried, laughing: "It strikes me that my friend Ledoux is too timid; perhaps he's a Moderate Republican."

"Yes, yes," assented the audience, amused; "he's a Moderate."

"Ah, well, I don't like Moderates—give me only thoroughgoing men."

I'd deny my best friend if he was a Moderate. Ledoux, m—my boy, you'll have to mend your manners."

All this was too much for the disgusted Pascal, who beat a retreat, leaving Marius in the café, and ran off to M. Marsault's house. He forgot, as he ran in, that Rosalie had not seen him since the accident that had befallen his nose, and he could not at first understand why she screamed and put her hand to her heart on perceiving him. When he remembered the truth, poor wretch! he coloured, and said: "Oh, mademoiselle, I hope I do not seem too horrible to you with my disfigurement; recollect it was in a duel that I got this wound!"

"Oh, yes, M. Ledoux; forgive me for being so disturbed," she answered, faintly. "I shall get used to the sight of this accident. But where is M. Bougeard? Papa tells me he had begged you to invite him to luncheon with us."

"Ah, mademoiselle, I regret to say that we have been cruelly deceived in this man, who is behaving disgracefully," said Pascal; and he gave an account of what had passed at the café.

"Poor fellow! After his many privations, a glass of champagne was naturally too strong for him," remarked Rosalie, compassionately. "You should not have left him alone at the café, M. Ledoux."

"But really, mademoiselle, he wouldn't come with me."

"No, no, it wasn't kind of you, M. Ledoux, to leave him in this way."

"But, mademoiselle, he wasn't in a fit state to be presented to you."

"Ah! now you are ungenerous," pouted the spoiled beauty, "I shan't make my peace with you unless you go back to the café this minute, and bring our poor friend home to luncheon."

There was nothing for it but to obey; so Pascal started for the café, but on arriving there found his bird had flown. The landlord could only say that M. Bougeard had gone out with a number of other gentlemen, but he did not know where. Fearful to return to M. Marsault's without him, Pascal hunted for the rogue all over the town for the next two hours; he even went to the police-station to look for him; but all in vain. At last he returned crestfallen to the notary's house, and was surprised to hear the sounds of laughter and jollity issuing from the dining-room. He fancied he could detect Marius's voice; and, sure enough, when he entered the room he saw the ex-Communist seated beside Rosalie, and making her merry with his sallies. M. Marsault and old Benot were present, too, and as happy as grigs. They had all been lunching pleasantly, and were now taking coffee.

"Oh, M. Ledoux, I am so sorry! M. Bougeard came in with papa almost immediately you had gone," exclaimed Rosalie, coolly.

"I wish you had sent after me to say so," responded Ledoux, fairly nettled for once.

"Well, never mind; don't be cross and disagreeable, but come and have some coffee," said the damsel, with a witching smile. "M. Bou-

geard has been telling us his adventures; and, do you know, we have all advised him to come forward as a candidate for the Lower House at the next election in Ville-Aubry?"

"Why, but I am to be the Liberal candidate at the next election," ejaculated Ledoux, by no means pleased.

"Couldn't you cede your turn to M. Bougeard?" inquired Rosalie.

"But why should I do so?" said Pascal.

"Because I ask you," replied Rosalie, sweetly.

The nonplussed barrister made no reply, but sat down gloomily and stirred his coffee, whilst old Marsault, giving him a slap on the thigh, chuckled: "Humour Rosalie, my lad; you'll find it safe play in the end."

VI.

To have picked a man out of gaol, to have paid his debts, to have sacrificed half one's nose for him, and then to find in him a rival—this is a fate which must be pronounced hard. Pascal Ledoux was the most long-suffering of men; indulgent in his judgment of others, and slow to take offence; but philanthropy was a hobby which he did not care to ride too hard. We have explained that he was ambitious, and so a consideration for number one formed part of his regular scheme of life. When he discovered that Marius Bougeard was beginning to supplant him in popularity, he thought the time had come for asserting himself as he had never done before. The gallant Marius had gone to live with his uncle; a public banquet had been given him in Ville-Aubry; the mayor had kissed him on both cheeks; and a deputation of working men had presented him with a memorial, begging that he would come forward as a representative of the Radical democracy on the first parliamentary vacancy. A vacancy opportunely occurred soon afterwards, and Marius launched his addresses on scarlet paper: Pascal Ledoux retaliated by issuing some of his own on pink. He and the ex-Communist had by that time ceased to be on speaking terms. They bowed when they met—that was all.

The Liberals of the town organised a committee, which sat to adjudicate upon the merits of the two candidates, and Pascal Ledoux was summoned to appear before it. To his anger and mortification, he was told that, in order to prevent the loss of a seat to the Liberals, he ought to retire in the ex-Communist's favour. All the arguments which he could adduce to the contrary were listened to with disapproval.

"But I won't retire!" he exclaimed at length. "The man is a scamp: why should I make way for him?"

"How can you call him a scamp, since you fought to prove that he was an honourable man?"

"And made countless speeches to persuade us all of the same thing."

"Brother Ledoux's personal ambition seems to be carrying him away

into forgetfulness of old friends," remarked the president of the Liberal committee, sternly.

"That man is not a friend of mine," shouted Ledoux, beside himself. "I deplore my folly in wasting a nose for him : I regret the speeches I made : I will never again make such a dolt of myself as I did on this Amnesty question."

Having said this, Ledoux resolved to push on his candidature, hap what might ; but the consequence was that the next time he went to call on Rosalie, access to her presence was denied him, though he had the mortification of perceiving his rival's—Marius's—overcoat and umbrella in the front hall. M. Marsault, however, on hearing his voice, came out and begged him to walk into his study. Here the two had a scene : "I am sorry for your sake, Ledoux, that you should persist in thwarting my daughter's wishes," said the notary, "for this naturally makes her doubt the sincerity of your affection."

"So it seems I can only prove my affection by making way on all occasions for a rival, who is no doubt trying to steal Mdlle. Rosalie's heart from me !" exclaimed Pascal, bitterly.

"If you are losing my daughter's heart, it is assuredly your own fault, for you know what an interest she takes in this poor young fellow, who has suffered so much."

"And you think this interest proper ? Perhaps you desire that Marius Bougeard should become your son-in-law, M. Marsault. Are you sure that you are not desiring to break off with me from inability to pay that dower of three hundred thousand francs which you promised me on the day when I married your daughter ?"

"M. Ledoux, if you were going to marry my daughter simply for her money, you are not the man I took you for," observed M. Marsault, loftily. "I wish you a good-morning."

During the days that followed this tiff, poor Ledoux was the unhappiest man in France. He really loved Rosalie Marsault, despite her capriciousness ; and he had founded no small hopes on the dower which he was to have obtained with her. It seemed now as though all his prospects were going to crumble down together. Wifeless, dowerless, noseless, and, so far as Parliament was concerned, seatless perhaps, what should he do in the future by way of fulfilling his ambitious dreams ? He would have to go to work again drudgingly at the Bar, mastering dull briefs, and drawing small fees on account of them. This was hard lines, as a result of his spirited and self-denying advocacy on behalf of a prisoner, and the musing over it almost made Pascal weep.

But there was a general cry for "Amnesty" at that moment among all the noisiest sections of the French community, and a man who had been amnestied, like Marius, was naturally more interesting than one who had always kept the even tenour of his way like Pascal. The latter saw that every man's face was growing cold to him, now that he had lifted up his heel against a popular favourite ; and even his kind act in

paying Marius's debts was somehow twisted into a cause of reproach against him; for people said that he had received a sum of money in trust for the payment of Bougeard's debts, and had appropriated the greater part of it to his own uses. This ridiculous rumour actually reached the ears of the Disciplinary Council of the Order of Advocates, whose president, old M. Lesage, sent for Pascal, and administered a paternal warning. "It seems," he said, "that Marius Bougeard is going about, saying that you swindled him. Of course, no sensible man believes him; but the world is composed largely of fools, and this ought to make you careful how you mix yourself up with the concerns of rascals' lions."

"What do you advise me to do?" asked Pascal Ledoux, with one of his doleful snuffles.

"You can do nothing except explain to me at whose instigation you paid Marius's debts?"

"At nobody's. I wanted to whitewash the fellow, that's all."

"But you expected to be repaid, I suppose; and as people are generally loth to believe in Quixotry where money matters are concerned, a good many will think you speculated on this rascal's distress."

"Well, I'll go off now and challenge him for telling lies about me," snivelled Pascal.

"That is the very last thing you must do, or it will be thought that you wanted to kill a creditor, which is a proceeding not sanctioned by any code of honour."

"Well, this is a wicked world, M. Lesage," remarked Pascal, dismally.

"It's an odd one," responded the old lawyer, "and you are an odd fellow not to have picked up a greater experience of it."

Pascal Ledoux went home meditating on these words, and he felt exceeding sorrowful. The day of election was at hand, and it was being rumoured through the town that if Marius succeeded in getting returned he would marry Mdlle. Rosalie Marsault. Old Benot was said to be taking the greatest interest in the election, paying for advertisements, placards, and so forth, and attending all the banquets at which his nephew Marius was to speak. This imprudent addiction to conviviality ended by telling upon a man of his age, and on the night before the election he fell seriously ill. M. Marsault at once hurried to his house, but found, to his surprise, that two other lawyers had already been sent for, one of them being M. Lesage. These items of intelligence were brought to Pascal Ledoux in the evening by no less a person than the chief of the local police, who added that he had a matter of importance to communicate to M. Ledoux's ear alone. "It is one which may affect the result of to-morrow's election," said he; and he explained that he was in possession of documents which proved that Marius had not only committed a murder during the Commune, but one of a peculiarly base sort, and for private motives wherewith politics had nothing to do.

"What does it matter since the man is amnestied?" responded Ledoux, indifferently.

"But if these facts were known to the electors they would never return him. Speak the word, M. Ledoux, and I hand over all these documents to you, so that you can have them printed and circulated by to-morrow."

"I am not in the least tempted to do it," answered Ledoux. "To begin with, it would look like unfair fighting; and in the next place I am well content that Ville-Aubry should elect this rogue and then find out his antecedents afterwards. That will read them a nice lesson."

"As you please, sir," said the chief of the police. "I think, however, I shall call on M. Benot."

"Oh, no, that would be of no use. Proofs ten times more cogent would not convince *him*. He wants to remain the uncle of a hero."

So there the interview ended, and Pascal Ledoux went to bed that night feeling serener than he had done for some time past. He was conscious of a real superiority over his antagonist now that he had spared him.

The next day the election took place, and the men of Ville-Aubry went forth to poll in melancholy files, quite tranquilly, as the French custom is. There were plenty of coloured posters on the street walls, but no crowding or confusion on the footways. Into the ballot-boxes the electors dropped their ballot-papers mysteriously, and it was only by the talk current in cafés that one could prognosticate how the election was likely to turn. A great many who were known to be Conservatives avowed having voted for the man of their party—a wealthy land-owning Count Desécus—while the mass of Republicans talked as if they had voted for Marius Bougeard. Hardly a man could be found who spoke of having voted for poor Pascal Ledoux.

The poll closed at six, and the votes were quickly counted up at the mairie and other voting stalls. Half an hour afterwards vague rumours began to circulate of Ledoux having polled more votes than had been expected. The throng of noisy supporters that had been escorting the ex-Communist about the town all day, and had now come to anchor with him in a café, began to thin off suspiciously. At the end of another half-hour, a new rumour, more disquieting than the first, caused them to disappear altogether. Marius Bougeard, growing uneasy, but not liking to show it, waited alone in the café to hear the result of the election, which was at last brought him by a newsboy. It was such as to make him stagger:—

NUMBER OF VOTERS, 10,020.

PASCAL LEDOUX	.	.	.	7,250
Count DESÉCUS	.	.	.	2,000
MARIUS BOUGEARD	.	.	.	270

VII.

When the glad tidings were brought to Pascal Ledoux by old M. Lesage, he was of course a long time before he could realise them.

"What does this mean?" he asked, in stupefaction. "Why, yesterday I seemed to have not a friend."

"It means simply that public opinion in France is a coward," answered M. Lesage. "There is an agitation abroad among turbulent folks in favour of an amnesty, and orderly people are afraid to oppose it by word of mouth; but send them to vote, and you soon see how hollow is the sympathy in favour of revolutionary cut-throats."

"Well, then, it's a better world than it looks," whimpered Ledoux, passing his handkerchief over his fragment of nose.

"Yes, it is; for I have another good piece of news for you," continued M. Lesage. "Old Benot died this afternoon, and he has made you his heir. His eyes were opened to the villany of his nephew before he died, and he heard also through different quarters how magnanimously you had behaved to the scapegrace. Thus 'all's well that ends well.'"

Matters were not yet quite ended though, for Pascal Ledoux had still to make his peace with Rosalie and to marry her. One is happy to say that, after a little while, he contrived to do both without much difficulty. He had a powerful ally in M. Marsault, who had every reason for being civil to old Benot's heir; and perhaps, too, in the girl's own heart, for Marius Bougeard ceased to be a very interesting creature when the sunshine of fortune had been withdrawn from him. He hastened to make his exit from Ville-Aubry after his defeat and subsequent exposure, and was last heard of in Russia, trying to promote Nihilist principles among some policemen, who, if reports were true, were conducting him to Siberia.

As for Pascal Ledoux, he has since his marriage become a wiser man. He sometimes reflects with chagrin that he had to pay for his Quixotry on a scamp's behalf with part of his nose; but some of us buy our experience of life much dearer than that, and so our friend Pascal has food for consolation.

How a Chinese B.A. was won.

ABOUT two centuries before the time of Abraham, the emperor who then sat upon the throne of China ordained that triennial examinations should be held among the officials of the empire, in order that the "unworthy might be degraded and the meritorious promoted to honour." The plan answered excellently well, we are told, and would probably have thenceforth become a recognised part of the machinery of government, had not evil times fallen upon the country. The peace which reigned as long as the virtuous sovereigns Shun and Yu (B.C. 2255-2197) occupied the throne, disappeared with the death of Yu, and disorder spread like a flood over the empire. In the council-chambers of the succeeding emperors, armed warriors took the place of the learned scholars who had advised their predecessors, and no examination, but such as would have tried the strength of their right arms and their skill in warlike fence, would have found favour with these soldiers of fortune for an instant.

Thus, though at intervals the nation returned to its right mind under the guidance of wise and beneficent rulers, the scheme inaugurated by Shun fell into abeyance, and it was not until nearly three thousand years later that Yang-te (A.D. 605-617) varied the monotony of his otherwise profligate reign by re-instituting a system of examination for office. Unlike everything European, and therefore thoroughly Chinese, the highest degree was instituted first, and the lowest last. Yang-te, like Shun, began by examinations among his courtiers. His successors, arguing that what was good for the courtiers would be good for the people at large, ordained that "search should be made each year in every prefecture and district for elegant scholars and dutiful sons," who should, after satisfying the examiners, be employed in the State.

In this way were called into being the three degrees which exist at the present day, viz. the *Siu-ts'ai*, or Elegant Scholar; the *Keu-jin*, otherwise *Heau-leen*, or Dutiful Son; and *Tsin-sze*, the earlier creation of Yang-te. The same books also upon which it was ordained that the candidates should be examined eleven hundred years ago, are still used for the like purpose. But as with advancing culture the number of competitors multiplied exceedingly, it became obviously impossible that offices should be found for all those who were successful; and the contests, especially for the lowest degree of *Siu-ts'ai*, soon ceased to be for anything more than the honour of the degree. Those who succeed in becoming *Tsin-sze* are, as a general rule, appointed at once to the mandarinat, and a *Keu-jin* who has influence in high quarters generally gets employment, but the degree of *Siu-ts'ai* does nothing more than

qualify the holder for official life. Unfortunately for the chances of these pass-men, the practice of drawing all officials from the *literati* has fallen into desuetude; and to such an extent has this departure from ancient custom been carried that nearly one-half of the mandarins of the present day have, it is said, never faced the examiners. Still the competitive examinations form the only officially recognised road to the mandarinship, and this alone is enough to keep the examiners' lists full. But, apart from this consideration, the high value which is attached by tradition to literary culture induces every one in whom glimmers the least intellectual light to tempt fortune in the examination hall. The first ambition of every self-made man is that a son may be born to him who will reflect glory on his grey hairs by winning a degree. He feels that his acquired wealth is as nothing to him, so long as his household is without the wearer of a buttoned cap to raise it above the families of the people, and to link it with the inhabitants of *yamuns* (i.e. official residences).

Such a one was Le Tai, the great salt merchant, who gave the name Le-chia Chwang to the village where he lived. He had begun life in a very small way, having been a junior clerk in the office of a farmer of the salt *gabelle*, to whose business he eventually succeeded. By constant perseverance, and by the help of some well-devised ventures, he gradually accumulated so considerable a fortune, that, when his employer signified his intention of retiring, he was able to pay him down a good round sum for the goodwill of the business, and to set at rest some official cravings which it was necessary to satisfy before he could obtain the Salt Commissioner's seal to his appointment. Fortune had been kind also to him in his domestic relations. The two sons who grew up before him were a double assurance to him that the sacrifices at his tomb would be duly and regularly offered. He had daughters, too, but they satisfied no ambition and dissipated no fear, and he laid, therefore, no great store on their existence. Not that he was an unkind father. On the contrary, he was fond of toying with his little daughters, but his heart was with his sons, Le Taou and Le Ming.

Taou had at an early age developed a taste for the counting-house, and was rapidly becoming as skilled as his father in driving bargains and defrauding the revenue. Ming, on the other hand, had, from his childhood up, displayed a studious bent of mind. When little more than an infant he would stand in the village school with his face to the wall and his hands behind his back, after the recognised fashion, and repeat, without stumbling, the "Three Character Classic" at the top of his voice, heedless of the like shrill utterances of the young Wangs and Changs who, envious of his superior attainments, declaimed in his ears their by no means perfect lessons. From such promising beginnings he made rapid strides in his studies, until, as he now boasts, he could say with Confucius that "at fifteen he bent his mind to learning." Under the guidance of a tutor, whose title to teach consisted only in the fact of his having, after many ineffectual efforts, taken the lowest degree of *Siu-ts'ai*

some twenty years before, he made himself master of the "Five Classics" and "Four Books," and could talk with equal fluency on the eight diagrams of Fuh-he, the doctrine of the "Superior Man," and the excellencies of the "Mother of Mencius." His acquaintance with the interpretations put upon these texts by every scholar, from K'ung Ying-ta to Yuen Yuen, was profound; and his knowledge of rites and ceremonies was such as to put to shame his less cultured father and brother. His scrupulous attention to every deferential observance inculcated in the rites of Chow proclaimed him a scholar, but marked him in their minds as a prig. He was not a lively companion, for his studies, instead of making him think or rousing his imagination, had only stored his mind with philosophical platitudes and well-worn truisms. But as the accumulation of a good stock of these was essential to enable him to pass the examination which would make him a possible mandarin, his friends put up with his references to Confucius and the other sages, and allowed themselves to be bored to death with his odes and essays. It was quite a relief to them, however, when, as the examination drew near, he betook himself to a summer-house in the garden, whither he carried his books and "the four precious things" of a scholar's study, viz. pencil, paper, ink, and inkslab. Here he spent his days and a great part of his nights in learning by heart the nine classics, laboriously conning the commentaries, and getting up the contents of the rhyming dictionaries. Once or twice he allowed himself to be enticed by his quondam schoolfellows, Wang and Chang, who also hoped to face the Literary Chancellor, into a pic-nic up the river to a Buddhist monastery embosomed in trees among the mountains. On these occasions the friends, as became scholars, lightened their feast by making couplets, and as he who failed in his task had to drink three cups of wine, it not unfrequently happened that Ming was, on the morning after such expeditions, more fit for his bed than his books. When he declared his intention of giving up these merry-makings as interfering with his work, his friends laughed at him, and confided to him their intention of smuggling "sleeve" editions of the classics into the examination hall, plaited in their queues, and advised him to do the same. But Ming, though inclined at first to yield to the temptation, refused, and went back to his summer-house and his books. From these nothing now withdrew him, not even the artifices of Kin Leen, the pretty waiting-maid of Miss Ling next door, who one day threw over the wall, so as to fall in front of his study window, a stone with a bit of paper tied to it. Ming picked it up, and found the paper to contain a couplet, which it did not require his deep reading to discover was an invitation to him to take the reverse direction of the stone. But he crunched the note in his hand, and buried his face in the "Book of Changes."

But soon the time came when he thought himself ripe for examination for the degree of Siu-ts'ai; so one morning he presented himself at the Le-fang department of the magistrate's yamun in the neighbouring

city, and demanded of the secretary in charge the conditions under which he could appear at the next ordeal. "First of all," said the secretary, who was not in a good humour that morning, "if you are the son of an actor, a prostitute, or a servant, it is no use your coming, for such people are not allowed to compete at all. But if you are not, you must send us in, in writing, your name and age, your place of residence, the names of your father, your mother, your grandfather and grandmother, your great-grandfather and great-grandmother. And further, you must give us a description of your appearance, the colour of your complexion, and whether you have any hair on your face. And now I must attend to my other business."

Acting on this hint, Ming made his bow, and as soon as he got home he sat down to supply the information required of him. He had some difficulty in going as far back as his great-grandparents, and when he came to the question of the colour of his complexion he hesitated, and would have liked to describe it as white, but after consulting the glass he saw the truth was too obvious, so he wrote "yellow." Armed with this paper, he returned to the yamun, and when it had been examined and pronounced satisfactory, he was allowed to take away a packet of examination paper. Each morning after this he walked into the city and past the yamun in the hope of seeing the official notice fixing the date of the next examination. At last, one day, as he turned the corner of the principal street, he saw a crowd at the yamun gate, standing before a fresh placard. In his excitement he forgot for a moment the Confucian maxim never to walk quickly, and he had almost broken into a run before the recollection of the words of the sage steadied his pace. As he came up, Wang met him with a face full of excitement: "His Honour has appointed the 5th of next month," said he; "so we have now got ten more days for work, and as I have been rather idle of late I shall go straight home and make up for lost time."

Ming scarcely heard what he said, but pushed into the crowd to read for himself the notification. True enough, it was as Wang had reported. The 5th was to be the day, and full of his tidings Ming went home to give the news to his parents. From that time he was treated with the consideration due to one who is about to take his first great step in life, and, as the excitement prevented his working, he spent most of his time in visiting those of his friends who were to be among his competitors, and talking over with them their respective chances. One thing filled him with alarm. As the day drew near he learned that he was to be one of upwards of two thousand competitors for forty degrees.

Daylight on the 5th saw crowds of students on their way to the Kaou-pung-tze, or examination hall, in the magistrate's yamun. As soon as they had all assembled the doors were thrown open at the upper end of the hall, and the magistrate entered and seated himself at a table covered with red cloth, on which were ranged pencils, inkstones, and paper, and at which also sat the secretaries who were to assist in the examination.

Presently, amid a death-like silence, a notice-board was displayed, on which it was announced that the work for the day would consist of an essay on the passage from the Lun-yu: "The Master said, 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?'" another essay on the passage, also from the Lun-yu: "A youth should overflow with love for all men," and a poem on "Wine," after the manner of the poets of the Tang dynasty.

Instantly two thousand pencils were seized by as many nervous and eager hands, and the work of the day began. Fortunately for Ming, the commentator's remarks on the first passage were tolerably fresh in his recollection, so that he was able to start off without delay. "Learning," he wrote, "is only the first step towards perfection, and he who desires to become a superior man must strive daily to improve his knowledge and perfect his understanding. But the Master's words have also a wider signification. They are intended to impress upon us that in every concern we undertake we must not only begin, but must also make an end. It is better not to begin a matter than, having begun, to leave it unfinished. But let us further consider this text. It is with the whole body that we pursue after an object, but it is with the heart that we accomplish it. Let us therefore try to keep our hearts pure and our intentions sincere, and we shall then be able to do great things. But how are we to keep our hearts pure?" And then he went on with some very excellent Confucianism to answer his own question, and brought his essay to a conclusion with a eulogy on the supreme wisdom of the text.

Flushed with his first success, he took up his second paper; but his views, or rather those he had imbibed from the commentators Choo He, Ch'ing Haou, and others, were not so clearly defined on the love with which a youth should regard all men, as on the first text. However, he began: "In this passage it is important to bear in mind the distinction the Master would draw between the love of a youth and the love of a full-grown man. A youth brought up within his father's house has no experience of the world, and has not arrived at that knowledge when it is safe for him to hate as a man should hate, or love as a man should love. The Master said that he hated those who spoke evil of others, those who slandered their superiors, and those who were forward and violent, and, at the same time, of contracted understanding. It is fitting, therefore, that men should rightly hate as well as rightly love. But how can a youth who is still unlearned decide for himself whom to love and whom to hate? Therefore the Master says he should love all men." Here his memory failed him, and, as he was incapable of any original thought, he would have had to lay down his pencil had it not occurred to him that he might drag into his essay a panegyric on the love of children for their parents. The idea was a happy one, and enabled him to complete the required number of lines before poor Wang, who sat near him, had done much more than write down the text.

But the poem he felt to be a more serious matter than either of the essays. Fortunately the subject was one upon which his favourite author Le Tai-pih had repeatedly written, and, finding that he had still plenty of time before him, he shut his eyes and tried to recall to his recollection the praises which that great wine-loving poet had lavished on the bottle. Gradually his memory summoned up lines and parts of lines, and conventional expressions in sufficient quantity to enable him to begin the mosaic which he was fully aware must make up any poetical effusion on his part. After much "ploughing with the pencil," and long mental struggles, he wrote as follows:

When o'er the village shines the evening sun,
And silent stand the tombs of bygone men,
When birds sing evening chant beside the way,
Then sit you down to drink your perfumed wine.
The men of old did quickly pass the flask,
And sharp of wit did improvise their songs,
Then youths were only bidden to the feasts,
Who drained their goblets to the latest drop.

With this final effort his work for the day was over, and he returned home with the happy consciousness that he had done well. For the benefit of his anxious friends he had to fight his mental battle o'er again, and he retired to bed to dream of honours lost and won; and just as he imagined himself introduced into the imperial presence as *Chwang-yuen*, or first literate of the year, he was roused by his father, who came to tell him that the morning was breaking, and that it was time to be up and stirring. The sun had scarcely risen on the earth when he found himself once again in the examination hall surrounded by his fellow-competitors of yesterday. Again the magistrate took his seat at the table, and without further preface it was announced that the work for that day, which would be the last of that examination, would consist of three essays: one on the passage from the *Le Ke*: "Tsze-shang's mother died, and he did not mourn for her. His father's disciples therefore asked of Tsze-sze, 'In bygone days did not Confucius mourn for his divorced mother?'" Another on the text from the *Classic of Filial Piety*: "The Master said, 'Formerly the intelligent kings served their fathers with filial piety, and therefore they served heaven with intelligence; they served their mothers with filial piety, and therefore they served earth with discrimination.'" And a third upon the passage from the *Single or Mental Philosophy of Choo He*: "Water belongs to the female principle of nature, yet it has its root in the male; fire belongs to the male principle, yet it has its root in the female."

By the time the papers were handed in Ming felt that he had written three fairly good essays. On several occasions during the day his attention had been attracted to his next neighbour, an old man whose trembling hand seemed scarcely able to trace the characters he wished to write. His ideas also evidently flowed slowly, and Ming had several times longed to

be able to offer him suggestions. How much they were needed was obvious from the unfinished state of the papers the old scholar handed in at the close of the day, and his dejected mien as he left the hall showed that he was painfully conscious of his shortcomings. But, truth to tell, the feeling that he had done well soon drove the recollection of the veteran out of Ming's mind, and he hurried home to satisfy the eager expectancy of his parents with the tale of his exploits. He knew, however, that his success would have to remain problematical until the publication of the lists in two or three days' time; and he wisely determined to give himself the rest which he felt he needed, and not to attempt to read for the second five-day examination, which he knew he would have to face almost immediately if his name should now appear in the charmed circle of successful competitors.

On the third day he went into the city to see if by chance the lists were published, and found the streets thronged by his associates, who had come on the same fruitless errand as himself. As, after midday, there was no hope of his anxieties being set at rest before the morrow, he allowed himself to be tempted by some of his fellow-students to join them in a picnic to a suburban garden, where the pleasure-seekers amused themselves by extemporising couplets and drinking wine among the flowers. Towards evening the fun grew fast and furious, and Ming found it necessary at last to retreat to a secluded summer-house to sleep off the effects of his potations before returning home. His debauch, however, did not prevent his being in the city early the next morning, as it had been reported among the *convives* of the previous evening that the lists would be out soon after daybreak. On entering the gates he was met by a candidate, by whose excited appearance Ming saw at once that his fate was sealed one way or the other. "The lists are out," said his friend, "and my name is in the circle." "I congratulate you," answered Ming, "and may you rise to office and reap emoluments! But where does my name appear?" "I had not time to look," said his friend as he hurried on. With all possible speed Ming made his way to the magistrate's yamun, outside the walls of which he saw an excited crowd gathered round a long strip of paper, covered for the most part with names written perpendicularly, but having at one end a circle composed of the centrifugally written names of those who had passed best. When fairly within sight of the paper which was to resolve his doubts, Ming suddenly felt an inclination to slacken his pace and to look in at the shop-windows. At last, however, he made his way into the crowd, and had just discovered his name in the circle when an acquaintance cried out, "Ah! Le Laou-ye,* I congratulate you. My name is only two from yours. But I am afraid our poor friend Wang is left out in the cold." "I am sorry for that," replied Ming, "but let me congratulate you on your success. Have you heard when the second examination is to be held?" "In two days' time. May you become a *chwang-yuen*!

* A complimentary title equivalent to 'your worship.'

Good-by!" "And may you have a seat at the Feast of the Blowing of the Deer!"* replied Ming, as he hurried off homewards to announce his good fortune.

At the news of his son's success the old salt-merchant's joy knew no bounds, and he instantly issued invitations for a feast on the next afternoon in commemoration of the event. In the meantime the house was besieged by friends—more especially poor ones—who came to congratulate Ming, and who exhausted every good wish it was possible to devise for his future happiness and advancement. In the estimation of his mother and sisters his success had already raised him on a pinnacle of fame; and, after their first burst of joy was over, his mother reminded him that a go-between had been to her several times to propose a marriage for him with Miss Yang, the daughter of an ex-prefect living in the neighbourhood; "and now that you are on the fair road to office," added she, "do let me authorise her to open negotiations." "Let us wait until I have made a name for myself by taking my degree," answered her son, "and then I will obey your wishes in that as in all other respects."

In the pleasurable enjoyment of being made much of, the two days' interval passed quickly to Ming, and the morning of the third day found him seated again in the magistrate's hall, surrounded by all his former competitors, with the exception of a few whose names had figured so near the tail of the long straight list that they had recognised the hopelessness of competing any more. The same old man who had excited his compassion at the first examination was there, however, looking excited and nervous. Ming was now the more sorry for him, as he had recognised his name almost last upon the list; but the entrance of the magistrate presently drove all thoughts but those on the subjects before him out of his head. This examination, it was announced, was, as usual, to last five days. The course on each of the first four days was to consist of an essay on a text taken from the Four Books, as well as of a poem. On the third day an ode on a given subject was to be optional, and on the fourth day an opportunity was promised to aspiring candidates of writing additional poems. On the fifth day the work was to consist only of half an essay on a theme from the Four Books.

At this examination Ming worked with varying success. His profound knowledge of the classics and the writings of the commentators stood him in good stead, and his constant study of the T'ang dynasty poets was amply rewarded by the way in which they honoured his drafts on them to meet his poverty of ideas. The ode on the third day, which was "On the Pleasure Men take in talking of the Signs of the Seasons," exercised his imagination to the utmost. Thrice he put pencil to paper, and as often he tore to shreds his lines. The fourth time he wrote as follows, and, as the hour of closing was drawing near, he handed the result in with his other compositions :—

* A feast given to the graduates at the provincial examinations.

When the belated guest his host reseeks,
 And cloudless skies proclaim the close of day,
 'Tis sweet to talk of treacherous weather past,
 And watch the dying sun's effulgent ray.

Ming was no poet, but even he felt that his lines lacked freshness of ideas and vigour of diction. He was conscious, however, of having made one or two happy turns in the rhymes, which, truth to tell, were borrowed from some old published examination papers; but, knowing the somewhat pedantic literary taste of the magistrate, he founded some hopes upon them. And he was right. After a few days of suspense his name appeared on the walls of the yamun, high up in the list of successful candidates. Again the rejoicings at Le-chia Chwang were repeated, and again congratulations poured in upon him from all sides. Even the ex-prefect, upon whose daughter Mrs. Le was keeping her eye, deemed the occasion of sufficient importance to warrant a note, which he sent, accompanied with a red-lacquer tray full of dainty dishes and luscious sweets, some of which Mrs. Le shrewdly suspected had been prepared by the delicate fingers of Miss Yang. This was the most gratifying recognition that Ming had as yet received, and he took the letter from the servant reverentially in both hands. Eagerly he tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"In ancient times men's merits were judged by the speed with which they chased a deer, the fleetest of foot winning the prize. But now the way to fame is bridged by learning, and for many years it has been my fate to speed and bid farewell to old friends like yourself, who fly on the wings of success to the capital. Of all the batches of brilliant scholars who have ever passed at these examinations I hear that that to which you have lent your countenance, and which has now entered the epidendrum city* of the learned, is the most conspicuous. Humbly I offer you the paltry things which with this letter I lay at your feet, and respectfully long for the sound of the gold fastening of your response."

Scarcely had Ming replied to this flattering epistle when a messenger arrived with an invitation from the magistrate to dinner on the following day. As it was in accordance with immemorial usage that the successful candidates should be entertained by the magistrate, this summons was no surprise to so keen a student of rites and ceremonies as Ming; and on the next afternoon he went in a sedan-chair to the yamun, fully prepared for the company he found assembled there. But he was much flattered by the way in which the magistrate received him. "Your honourable essays are genuine pearls of literature," said his host; "and you are possessed of a bellyful of classical knowledge, which cannot but gain you admittance to the Dragon [i.e. imperial] presence." "Your honour overrates the mean pencil-scratchings of this

* I.e. the joyous company.

dullard, and allows the reflection of your lofty genius to brighten the inelegancies of his wretched compositions," replied Ming. This speech he had carefully prepared as he came along in his chair, on the chance of his having to reply to a complimentary greeting. His fellow-students, however, being unaware of his forethought, sang aloud their praises of his readiness as they sat down to the feast. Before starting, Mrs. Le had strictly enjoined Ming to bring back an account of the good things he was to partake of, and in obedience to her orders he stored his memory with the following list of dishes :—

Bêche de mer; stewed duck, served with force-meat; birds'-nest soup; hashed pigeon, with ham; stewed crabs; fried black fish; stewed mutton, with bamboo shoots; fowl and ham; turtle-soup; hashed dog; stewed black cat; fried rat; macaroni soup; salt fish; salted eggs; minced pork; basins of rice; and an infinite variety of fruits and sweets.

Before beginning, the magistrate poured out a libation, and without more ado the guests set to work at the good things before them. The wine circulated freely, and lent material aid to the magistrate in his endeavours to set every one at his ease. To Ming the magistrate showed marked attention, and with his own chopsticks carried a fine slug from the dish to the lips of the favoured guest, a compliment which made quite a stir among the other scholars. Not far from Ming, but apart from every one, sat the old student whom he had noticed in the examination hall, but whose want of success scarcely entitled him to a seat at the feast. Some such remark Ming made to the magistrate, who explained that each year a certain number of degrees were given away to plucked old students, and that he was going to recommend his guest for one on this occasion. After dinner Ming made a point of congratulating the old man, who in quavering accents made a pedantically complimentary reply, every word of which was taken from the "Four Books." Wang, Ming noticed, was not among the invited, and the magistrate told him that though there were clever thoughts and much sound reasoning in his essays, yet it was too plain that his knowledge of the texts of the classics and the views of the commentators were not sufficiently thorough to pass him, and that therefore he had been obliged to advise him to come up again next time.

From private sources Ming heard that Wang was sorely disappointed at his want of success, so the next morning he wrote him the following note of condolence :—"The decayed willows on the Sin-ting Pass sent forth a sweet savour, and rotten T'ung trees delighted Tsai Yung* with their melody. If a jewel be encased in a hidden casket, it is not every

* A celebrated scholar and musician of the second century. It is recorded of him that while seated at the fireside of a friend in the State of Wu, his attention was attracted to the sounds emitted from a log of a T'ung tree which was burning on the hearth, and declaring that its tone gave promise of rare excellence, he converted it into a lute.

sword which can cleave it so as to display the jewels * found by Pien Ho on the King mountain or the pearls snatched by the Earl Suy from the serpent's head. Who can explain the lofty talents enjoyed by some, or account for the meaner abilities bestowed on others? We are as we are made, and there is no helping ourselves." To this kindly epistle Wang sent reply:—

"Well may I adopt the lines of Chang Shu as my chant—

A thousand miles o'er sea and fields
I have followed at your horse's heels;
I have travelled over hill and dale,
And now have missed the Dragon's scale.†

Gratefully I acknowledge your sympathising words, in which I recognise the lofty nature which has enabled you to overcome all the difficulties in your path. Though incapable through grief to write, I fear to return you a verbal message. As night approaches my sorrow almost seems to weigh me down, and I wrap myself in a cattle cloak, after the manner of Wang Chang,‡ and weep bitter tears. What else is left for me to do?"

Ming knew that he would now have a respite of two or three months before the time came for him to be examined by the prefect, as a preliminary to his going up for his final examinations before the Literary Chancellor. He retired therefore again to his summer-house, and devoted himself to a renewed study of the books which had already served him so well. As the day drew near, his father wrote to an old friend at the prefectural city, asking him to receive his son for the examination, and, in response to a cordial invitation which was returned, Ming mounted his mule one morning at daybreak, and started off on his momentous journey. Late in the evening he reached the hospitable door of his father's friend, and woke the next morning, after a sound sleep, refreshed and ready for the work before him. After eating a hasty breakfast, he hurried off to the yamun of the Literary Chancellor, and arrived only just in time, for he had scarcely got into the hall when the gun went off which was the signal for the closing of the doors. The arrangements he found to be in all respects similar to those at the magistrate's yamun, and the subjects for examination were taken from the same books, the only difference being that the prefect's more liberal mind was reflected in the texts he chose for the essays. With each of

* A block of jade which, being believed to be spurious was rejected by two emperors in succession, the last of whom condemned Pien Ho (eighth century B.C.) to lose his left foot as an impostor. The next emperor, however, perceiving the genuineness of the stone, graciously accepted it, and offered Pien Ho a title of nobility, which he declined.

† I.e. "And now have missed taking my degree." The idea, a poetical one, being that a successful scholar resembles a soaring dragon.

‡ A well-known character, who, after enduring great poverty, afterwards became a metropolitan magistrate.

his five days' work Ming was fairly satisfied, and when the examination was over he waited with some acquired confidence the publication of the result. The appearance of his name, however, in the first flight of successful competitors, was none the less a delight to him, and he sent off an express messenger to Le-chia Chwang to proclaim his success to his parents. "Your stupid son," he added, "is but waiting to obey the invitation sent him by his Excellency the Prefect to dinner to-morrow before hastening to your honourable dwelling to throw himself at your feet." The dinner at the prefect's was very much a repetition of that given by the magistrate, except that there was a marked weeding out in point of numbers. The reputation which Ming had brought with him for scholarship, and which he had just maintained, insured him friendly notice at the hand of the prefect, who, however, did not seem much to relish his stilted style of conversation and his Confucius-or-nothing train of thought. Before the students parted their host announced that, as usual, he should send the seat numbers and not the names of the successful competitors to the Literary Chancellor, who would hold the final examinations on that day month in that city.

The next day Ming went home, and was met at the entrance of the village by a number of his associates, who greeted him with cries of congratulation. The welcome he received from his immediate family was especially joyous, and for days a succession of visitors poured in upon him to offer their felicitations on his marked and sustained success. Under such agreeable circumstances he took little heed of time, and almost before Ming was aware he was reminded that it was time he again betook himself to the prefectural city. The merchant who had been his host on the previous occasion was glad enough once more to open his doors to a scholar who was already winning for himself eminence; and though he cared little for his companionship, preferring lively and suggestive conversation to dull platitudes and measured periods, he paid him marked deference, as to one to whom the door of office, the highest object of ambition, would soon be opened.

The ordeal Ming was now called upon to face was more terrible to him than any of the other examinations had been. Up to this time he had presented himself only before the local officials, men whom he had constantly seen, and with whom he was in a sense familiar. Besides, hitherto the contests had been but preliminary, whereas the examinations in which he had now to compete were either to make or mar him, at all events temporarily; and the examiner was surrounded with all the dignity and awe of an unknown great personage. It was with no slight trepidation, therefore, that he took his seat again on stool No. 33, by which number he was known for the time being. As soon as the gun was fired and the door shut, the Chancellor entered. As he approached the table, all rose, and every eye was turned towards the man in whose hands their fate rested. He was of medium height and a plump figure, with a round good-natured face, a pair of small twinkling

eyes, and a long scanty moustache. After bowing politely to the students, he seated himself at the table and straightway proclaimed on the notice-board that on this occasion he should require from them two essays on the texts, from the "Four Books": "The Master said, 'It is by the odes that the mind is aroused: it is by the rules of propriety that the character is established; and it is from music that the finish is received.'" And, "When a ruler sympathises in his people's joys, they take pleasure in his rejoicings; and when he shares their sorrows, they sympathise with his griefs." And a poem on the "pleasure of hearing the notes of a distant lute amid the sound of drippings from the roof on a wet day."

Ming was too nervous to collect his thoughts and set his memory at work at once, and it was some time before he put pencil to paper. But when he did, he made fair progress, and at the end of the day he had the satisfaction of knowing that if his essays contained no new or striking thoughts, they were at all events thoroughly orthodox, and that the sentences were framed in accordance with the rules laid down by some of the best-known essayists. He was rather disappointed, therefore, to find, when the list of eighty optimes came out, that "Thirty-three" was barely within the first forty. This was the first check of any kind which he had met with, and it alarmed him; for he gathered from it that the Commissioner did not take the same favourable view of his literary matter and manner as the magistrate and prefect had done. It was with a sobered countenance, therefore, that he took his seat again for the second trial. This time several themes were given out from the "Four Books," upon which the students were expected to compose half essays. To these Ming devoted his best energies, and was rewarded by finding his number published two days later in the circle of successful competitors.

Having recovered some of his confidence from this result, Ming again took his seat in the hall, on the morning after the publication of the lists, with some assurance. The comparatively small number of competitors, which had been reduced to eighty, or just double the number of degrees competed for, by the Chancellor, gave a silent and business-like air to the assembly. On this occasion the candidates wrote an essay on a text from the "Four Books," one on a text from the "Five Classics," and a poem. At the close of the day's work the Commissioner announced that after examining the papers he should, as was customary, write to the prefect for the names of the best men, whom at present he only knew by their numbers, and should at once publish them. "And I have arranged," he added, "that the first competitors from the other districts shall meet you here in ten days' time finally to compete for the degrees." The next few days were spent by Ming in a fever of suspense which the complimentary speeches of his merchant host were quite ineffectual to allay. To fail now, he felt, would be a terrible blow both to his fortunes and his pride. What would all his friends say? and what would, above all, the exprefect Yang say? However, fortune was kinder to him than his fore-

bodings, and once again he saw with triumph his name among the number of the successful. On this occasion his pleasure was all the greater, since he felt that now he was practically sure of his degree. The final examination spoken of by the Commissioner would, he knew, consist only of a test of his knowledge of the text of the sixteen "Sacred Edicts" of the Emperor K'ang-he, and of "the Amplification" of the same by his son and successor, Yung-Ching. On this point he felt that he could trust his memory to carry him through, for had he not in his study at Le-chia Chwang repeated them over and over again by heart without missing a character? However, to make assurance doubly sure, he devoted some hours of each of the succeeding days to conning them over. On the appointed morning at daybreak he made his way to the Chancellor's hall, where he found assembled his fellow pass-men, together with the picked competitors from the other four districts of the prefecture. There was a semi-holiday air about them all, as though they looked on this trial more as a formality than anything else. The Commissioner, too, entered the hall with a lighter step, and his voice had a cheery tone in it as he ordered the announcement to be made that the morning's work would consist of writing out from memory the seventh edict of the Beneficent Emperor K'ang-he, beginning "Chu e twan," "Flee strange doctrines," with the "Amplification" of the same by his august and intelligent son Yung-Ching.

Fortunately for Ming this particular edict had been frequently in evidence lately at Le-chia Chwang with reference to the foreign missionary question, which was beginning to disturb that otherwise quiet district. The passage in the "Amplification," *yew joo se-yang keaou tung T'een chu, yih shuh puh king*—"As to the religion of the Western foreigner which exalts the Lord of Heaven, it is also contrary to our sacred books," &c.—had been constantly quoted in opposition to the proselytising zeal of the missionaries, and the context had been carefully studied by village Confucianists. His task was therefore a comparatively light one, and, when he put down his pencil, he felt assured that he had not missed one of the six hundred and forty characters composing the extract. Shortly after noon he walked into his host's family hall, and with so jaunty a step that it needed no words of his to assure his entertainer that he was speaking to a Siu-ts'ai almost *in esse*. It now only remained for him to await the public notification of the final result of the series of examinations which he had gone through during the last two months. On the third day this was published, and the local world was made acquainted with the fact that Le Ming, together with thirty-nine others from the same district, had obtained the degree of Siu-ts'ai. As soon as Ming had despatched a letter with the news to his father, and received the congratulations of his merchant host, he hurried off to one of the first tailors in the city to order the canonicals belonging to his newly acquired honour.

The next day, as in duty bound, the newly made Siu-ts'ais went at

the recognised hour to pay their respects to the Chancellor, who received them graciously, and entertained them on tea and sweets, while a band in the courtyard enlivened the company with inspiring music. Ming was not musical, but even he could not help recognising that well-known and deservedly popular air, "The Autumn Tints stretch across the Sky," and when the musicians struck up the first bars—



he could not resist humming to himself the picturesque refrain :

"Yaou loh ch'iu t'ung,
Ngai nan chih hwei tsui,
Yuen k'o tsan t'ung,
Han chang shuy k'o kung chwang t'un."

There was one more prescribed ceremony to be gone through before he could return home. On the afternoon following the visit to the Chancellor's the same gay company went to worship at the temple of Confucius, where, after having prostrated themselves before the image of the Sage, they partook of a feast spread in the courtyard at the expense of the city. Towards evening the scene became one of revelry, and the amount of wine consumed as forfeits in the game of *Mora* sent many of the guests to bed with "very red cheeks" to "get up very white in the morning." When Ming reached his host's, he found his canonicals had arrived from the tailor's, and, tired though he was, he could not resist the pleasure of trying them on. Early dawn saw him again before the looking-glass, and after a hasty breakfast he set off for Le-chia Chwang amid the congratulations and good wishes of the worthy merchant and his family. In the evening he reached his home, and when he walked into the family hall, bearing on his person the insignia of his success, his father fairly wept with delight. Nor were the other members of the family less demonstrative as with one consent they offered their congratulations and expressed their admiration of the becoming and dignified dress which it was now his right to wear. After his mother had carefully examined his silver-buttoned cap surmounted by a silver bird, his robe of blue silk bordered with black, and his girdle with silver pendants, she whispered in his ear, "And now may I speak to the go-between?"

"Yes, now," replied her son.

R. K. D.

A Seat in the House.

IT is difficult to decide at what date a seat in the House of Commons began to be an object of ambition with gentlemen of easy fortunes. As far as one can judge, it was hardly till the reign of Elizabeth that squires and comfortable tradesmen cared to endure the expense and trouble of serving their country in this fashion. During the first two centuries of our parliamentary life, boroughs often petitioned the Crown that they might be spared the exercise of their privilege of sending representatives to Westminster. At first our Kings were not easily induced to comply with such requests; but as the House of Commons grew to be a power in the State, Royalty began to take a new view of the situation, as did also the nobles. One day the eldest son of an Earl of Bedford stood for Parliament, and was elected—and the House became, as it has since remained, essentially aristocratic in tone; for that it is such must never be forgotten. Lord Palmerston noticed the fact as soon as the first Reformed Parliament met in 1833. "I don't see," he observed, "much difference between this House and the last. In both one finds the same dislike of cant, the same loyalty, the same fondness for precedent, the same maintenance of privilege."

The right to vote for the election of members appears to have always been more keenly appreciated than the right to serve in Parliament; hence our earliest Reform Bill—the Act of 1429—which limited the country suffrage to forty-shilling freeholders. This reform, if such it can be counted, was obviously based on the principles of an earlier one. Under our Norman and Angevin kings, all barons holding their lands directly from the sovereign were summoned to the great council of the realm. As these multiplied with the subdivision of land, the practice was felt to be inconvenient, and gradually the custom became established that none of the barons should repair to Parliament except those summoned by name.

The House of Commons was enlarged by successive monarchs, notably by the Tudors. Mary I. is supposed to be the first of our rulers who understood the benefits of "packing" a House by the creation of fresh seats. Elizabeth created others; as did James I., to whom the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge owe their representation. The Stuarts, however, soon grew wearied of Parliament. James was once to receive a deputation from the House of Commons: "Place twelve chairs round my throne," he said to the Chamberlain; "I am about to receive twelve kings." Charles I.'s idea of constitutional government was, not to create

fresh boroughs, but to commit to the Tower members who spoke against the policy of the Court. Sir John Eliot, for this sole offence, died in prison; and England long endured a similar tyranny with nothing more than angry murmurs. Charles II. was the last of our sovereigns who, by his own royal will, conferred on boroughs the right of sending members to Parliament. He exercised this prerogative in two or three cases at the most; but it is worth noting that the prerogative has never been abolished. The Queen could create a hundred new constituencies to-morrow, as she could a hundred peers, without committing an illegal act. Of course such an exercise of power would be unconstitutional; but it ought not to be forgotten that the word "constitution," and the adjectives derivable from it, have no place either in the statute or the common law of England.

It may, nevertheless, be fairly argued that the Act of Union (1707) between England and Scotland does, by implication, limit the royal prerogative in the matter of creating fresh seats. Scotland was then accorded 16 seats in the Lords and 45 in the Commons, obviously on the understanding that the Crown was no more of its own free will to tamper with the representation. The English House of Commons at that time consisted of 513 members; after the union it rose to 550, and so continued till the union with Ireland. The sister kingdom was authorised to send 100 members to the "Imperial" Parliament (so called for the first time), which raised the members to their present normal figure of 650 (*normal* because there are seven seats vacant at this moment through the disfranchisement of constituencies pronounced by judges or committees to be more than usually corrupt).

It is worthy of remark on this head, that England, the dominant nation of the United Kingdom, has been singularly generous towards Scotland and Ireland in the matter of representation. The Reform Bill of 1832 raised the number of Scottish members to 53; that of 1867 to 60. The Irish representatives have likewise been increased in number from 100 to 105. Thus England has cheerfully sacrificed 20 seats, equal to 40 on a division, in order to render "justice," as it is facetiously called, to her presumably aggrieved co-nationalities.

Ireland, however, may still boast a grievance. By the Act of 1800 she was to send, not only 100 members to the Lower House, but 32 to the Upper—viz. 28 lords temporal and 4 spiritual. Mr. Gladstone's Disestablishment Act of 1869 deprived Ireland of her "spiritual representation without giving her an equivalent."

The question of federation between Great Britain and her colonies has often been raised; but one notable difficulty seems to have been generally overlooked. How are the colonies to be represented in the Upper House? The question is only of importance in so far that one may be sure that, *exempli gratia*, Canada would insist on her full rights in this matter. The best solution would probably be to name some life peers from the Canadian Senate, the members of which are appointed by

the Governor-General for life. In colonies where the members of the Upper Houses sit for only a term of years, the Imperial representatives in the Lords would have to be elected for a corresponding period. Peers of Scotland, and Lords of Appeal, do not, as such, sit for life—so that no constitutional principle could be violated. Still it must be admitted that the number of the Peers is already large. In any calculations on this subject, India must of course be omitted; for the present she is a dependency of the empire, not an integral part of it.

The history of the relative power of the two Houses is extremely curious. The Lords probably remained the more important Chamber till the reign of Henry VIII.; by the reign of James I. the supremacy of the Commons had certainly been established. Guizot points out that in the reign of Charles I. the collective wealth of the House of Commons was far greater than that of the Lords—a decisive fact. It is a significant circumstance, too, that Hampden's friends in the early part of this reign wished him to ask for a peerage, and that he preferred a seat in the Lower House as giving more influence. A wild scheme entered into the mind of Charles. Having found it impossible to govern altogether without a Parliament, he fancied that he might, at least, suppress the House of Commons: hence the famous convocation of the great council of Peers at York. The Peers came; but declined to act without the concurrence of the third estate. Some ten years later the Commons suppressed them. The Lords, as became them, died with dignity. They adjourned till the morrow. This was early in February, 1649; the morrow was to be in May, 1660. Never perhaps in our history was the House of Commons so detested and despised by the nation as when it ruled alone.

Nevertheless, the prestige of the Lords had suffered a hopeless shock; and though their votes again and again were to prove of distinct historic importance, yet on each occasion it is clear that this was simply because they happened at the moment to reflect more distinctly than the Commons the will of the nation. In the Convention Parliament of 1689 the Earl of Devonshire coolly suggested the adjournment of a debate till the pleasure of the Commons should be known. "By that time," as he put it, "we may get some lights from below." The Peers were deeply offended, the Earl properly rebuked.

The happy thought of packing the House of Lords seems first to have occurred to James II. Churchill objected to Sunderland that the Lords might refuse to pass a Bill. "Oh, silly!" replied the Minister; "your troop of guards shall be sent up to the House of Lords." Anne actually tried the experiment, creating twelve Peers in a day, with the avowed object of carrying through a measure. As the new lords filed in, the Marquis of Wharton sarcastically asked if they meant to vote singly or by their foreman. How William IV. authorised Lord Grey, in writing, to create as many Peers as he pleased, in order to pass the Reform Bill, is known to everybody; but it is not so generally known

that Lord Grey's heart failed him at the last moment, or his patrician instincts were too strong. He threatened, but did not mean to act. Had the Peers again thrown out the Bill, he had made up his mind to resign.

It is worth noting, that while the Peers do still exercise their privilege of vetoing the decisions of the national representatives, the Crown has entirely abandoned its power in this respect. Our first constitutional King, as William III. may be fairly called, repeatedly refused his assent to laws approved by the two Houses; but none of his successors ventured to repeat the experiment. One measure that the King peculiarly disliked and twice vetoed was for limiting the duration of Parliaments to three years. Till then a Parliament lasted exactly as long as the King pleased. Charles II. actually kept one for eighteen years. William was much troubled when the Bill was sent up to him the third time; and wrote to Sir William Temple for advice. Sir William advised compliance, and sent his private secretary, "Mr. Swift," to give his reasons in detail. The King was not convinced, though he was much pleased with Swift, and asked the latter "if he would like a troop of horse?"—an offer declined with thanks.

Though the King had meant to veto the Bill once more, he did not. The sudden illness of the Queen, who was soon given over by the physicians, deprived him of all courage for the time, and he shrank from a conflict with the House of Commons. The Bill became law (December, 1694). It was repealed in 1716, when the Septennial Act was passed. It was feared that a general election, in 1717, would have resulted in a Jacobite majority.

The formula for refusing assent to a Bill, should Her Majesty ever care to do so, would be: "*La Reine s'avisera.*"

In these days we associate a seat in the House with all that is pleasant and dignified. It was not always so. Not only did members run the risk of imprisonment from Tudors and Stuarts for their speeches, but they occasionally received strange treatment from their own colleagues. James II. once addressed a scolding speech to his Parliament; the House resolved to take his Majesty's message into consideration. They met in great dejection, being really sorry to have offended the King. One member, who was so incautious as to say, "I hope we shall not be frightened from our duty by a few sharp words," was instantly committed to the Tower. The discipline of the House, too, was severe under the Stuarts. That members should have been forbidden (temp. Jac. I.) to smoke during a debate, or to spit on the floor, is not surprising; but it must have been a real grievance not to be allowed to go to sleep. Henry Marten was once taking a nap, when a dull member called the attention of the House to his offence, and moved that he should be admonished. "Mr. Speaker," quoth Marten, on awaking to the situation, "if we are to take order with the noddors, I move we do likewise with the plodders. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)" A good deal was forgiven to Marten, who indeed was as wise as witty.

The privilege of members from arrest is immemorial. With the reign of Charles II. it became a reality. The Court had to seek other methods than the old ones of expressing its displeasure with the Opposition.

Sir John Coventry having used expressions displeasing to the King, the Duke of Monmouth resolved to avenge his father's honour. Sir John was waylaid one night by a gang of ruffians in the Duke's pay, and his nose slit. The House was furious; but there was no evidence against anybody, and it had to content itself with passing the "Coventry" Act, which enacts the severest penalties against persons guilty of similar assaults. However, from that day the Court let members' noses alone. Persuasion was felt to be better than force. Danby did not exactly introduce the practice of bribing members, but he was the Minister who reduced it to a system. The direct bribery of members in hard cash lasted for about a century. Lord Rockingham was the first Prime Minister who refused to bribe. His term of office was remarkably short. The price of a member's vote ranged, under George III., from 200*l.* to 1,000*l.* Mr. Grenville, in asking Lord Saye and Sele, by letter, for his support, enclosed a 200*l.* note. Lord Saye wrote back, promising his vote, but returning the money. The tone of Lord Saye's letter is extremely courteous, with absolutely nothing in it of offended dignity. He merely observes that he has made it a rule never to accept presents of that sort. Mr. Grenville replies by complimenting him on his nice sense of honour.

Tillotson had the courage to remonstrate with William III. against the practice. The King took the lecture in good part, and told the Archbishop he was very sorry, but could not help himself. "There was no other way with those men." It was in that reign that Sir John Trevor, Speaker of the House of Commons, was found guilty of taking a bribe of a thousand guineas to forward a private Bill. He was ordered to move a vote of censure on himself from the chair. Next day he was to have moved his own expulsion from the House. He contrived, however, to be ill on the morrow; and the House good-naturedly accepted the excuse. Danby, who had become Duke of Leeds, was reported by a committee of the Commons to have accepted a gift of 5,000*l.*, under suspicious circumstances; and impeached accordingly. Luckily or unluckily for the Duke, the witness on whom the Commons counted instantly disappeared. The impeachment had to be dropped, but the Duke's reputation was gone. It is characteristic of the age that his Grace, nevertheless, remained President of the Council for some time longer. It was on this occasion, by the way, that the Duke told the Peers that amazing anecdote about himself and Mr. Savile. The Duke, as Treasurer, had once had a lucrative office in his gift. "Mr. Savile came to me and said, 'I don't want the place myself, but tell everybody who asks you for it that I recommended him.' 'What, Harry,' I said, 'tell them all!' 'Why, yes; because then whoever does get it,

will be sure to pay me.' So I told every one who came to me: 'Sir, you are much beholden in this matter to Mr. Savile.' And the end was Harry got a handsome present." An equally good story belongs to this period. Under James II., a member was going to vote the wrong way. "Sir," significantly remarked a Minister, "I think you have a place in the Customs?" "Yes," replied the hon. gentleman; "but my brother died yesterday, and left me 700*l.* a year. So I don't care."

To return to the question of the privileges of members, it may be observed that one of them now extinct, that of franking, dated from the commencement of the reign of Charles II. The House conferred the revenues of the Post Office on the Duke of York, or, to put it more exactly, gave his Royal Highness a monopoly of the letter-carrying trade. At the same time they claimed that letters sent by members of either House should go free. One member spoke bitterly against this clause as "pitiful" and contemptible. Was he a rich man?

The privilege of franking was always highly esteemed and abused by patriots of all hues, without the slightest sense of shame. Chief Justice Abbott, on being raised to the peerage, naturally received the congratulations of the Bar. The new Lord (Tenterden), in returning thanks, observed that nothing in his elevation gave him greater pleasure than the privilege of being able to frank the letters of his friends of the legal profession. Members of the junior Bar soon availed themselves of his lordship's kindness in a way that grieved him much. It was not the number of the franks he minded, but the remarkable addresses to which the signature "Tenterden" found itself appended.

A few years later, Macaulay, giving his sister an account of how he spent the day, mentions that he regularly devoted a portion of his time to franking letters. The system was at length abolished in 1840, with the introduction of the penny post. America, however (always a full generation behind us in political progress), still allows her senators and representatives to enjoy perfect immunity from the claims of the revenue in this respect.

A propos of Macaulay, one must never forget that this great man's career was probably helped forward full ten years by the much-reviled system of pocket boroughs. In 1830 he had been known for some years as one of our most brilliant writers; but no "free and independent" constituency had dreamed of sending him to Parliament to represent it, nor had he cherished such a hope, except as a vague possibility of the future. In that year Lord Lansdowne offered him Calne, which he gratefully accepted. Calne has since enjoyed the honour of returning Mr. Lowe to the House. Of pocket seats, the largest number absolutely in the gift of a single person seems to have been eleven—the figure at which the parliamentary influence of the Dukes of Norfolk was to be computed at the close of the last century. The Howards of the ducal line remained themselves excluded from the House for about a century continuously, owing to their adherence to the Church of Rome. At

length, in 1780, an Earl of Surrey took the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and was straightway returned to Parliament. On the whole, he was a man of patriotism and integrity, but unfortunately lacking in certain social qualities. The Whig leaders were one day discussing who should move the amendment to the Address. Fox finally decided in these words: "Saddle *black* Surrey for the field to-morrow." Surrey might have retorted with a venerable fable about the pot and the kettle.

Stowe had six seats absolutely at its disposal till the Reform Bill, but this number is far from representing the measure of the parliamentary influence wielded by the Grenvilles during two generations. Only second to them in power were the Russells, who, however, lacked talent. Curiously enough, it never seems to have occurred to the second Earl Temple, the then head of the Grenvilles, to put his young cousin, William Pitt, into the House. So Pitt, *etatis* twenty-two, suggested to the University of Cambridge that it might do itself the honour of send him to St. Stephen's. That learned body declined, not without *hauteur*. It ended in the future Premier being returned by the Lowthers for their borough of Appleby. Two years later, the University had no fault whatever to find with the Right Hon. William Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Universities have rarely been fortunate in their choice of "burgesses," and, when they do get a brilliant man, generally manage to quarrel with him before long. Pitt is, perhaps, a solitary exception. When Peel decided on introducing the Catholic Emancipation Bill, he resigned his seat for Oxford University and stood again. But Oxford would none of him. About the same time Cambridge thrust out Lord Palmerston for the same offence.

In every country but ours members are paid for the discharge of their legislative functions. The American Congress went so far as to raise the salary of representatives only the other day, and a seat in the House is now practically worth 1,000*l.* a year. In England the custom of paying members was never formally abandoned; but, gradually, one borough after another discontinued the practice. Andrew Marvell was the last member salaried by his own constituents—the citizens of Hull. Certainly a more honest politician never lived. Mr. Gladstone has declared himself against the principle of paying members, "but does not see why the proposal should startle us out of our five senses."

One wonders that no prince of the blood has ever canvassed a constituency. There is nothing in the world—at least, nothing in the law—to prevent Prince Leopold from tacking the initials M.P. to his name, if he can get a county or borough to return him, and most of them would probably return a son of the Queen by acclamation. The experiment might be worth trying; though Her Majesty could at any moment cut the matter short by creating the candidate for plebeian honours a Peer, because a peerage is theoretically in the nature of a burden or charge.

laid on one by the sovereign, and which cannot, therefore, be refused. A royal Clodius, however, might become a very popular personage for a while. He might pathetically lament that, longing to be of the people, he was debarred by royal tyranny from that honour and happiness. He would get plenty of men to believe him.

The number of our Parliaments is about 250. The longest in duration, after Charles II.'s (already referred to), was that emphatically called the Long Parliament. It met on November 3, 1640, and was forcibly dissolved by Cromwell, April 20, 1653. The shortest was that summoned by Henry of Lancaster, in the name of Richard II., for the purpose of deposing that monarch. It lasted one day (September 29, 1399), despatching its business with remarkable punctuality. Another of Henry's Parliaments obtained the name of *Parliamentum Indoctum*, because lawyers were excluded from it. This assembly met at Coventry (1404); as did also, in 1459, the *Parliamentum Diabolicum*, which attainted the followers of the White Rose. Other strange names bestowed on these time-honoured councils are the "*Mad Parliament*," the first in which borough deputies sat; and the "*Addled Parliament*" (1614), which declined to give James I. as much money as he wanted. Since the commencement of the institution, we have never been more than eleven years without a Parliament; this was, of course, from 1629 to 1640. Another long and sad period of a similar nature was from 1681 to 1685. Since the accession of William and Mary we have never been more than a few weeks without one—the time necessary for the issue of writs for a fresh election and the returning of members; for with us one Parliament cannot be summoned till its predecessor has been dissolved. In America, Congress never dies. Every alternate 4th of March the members elected the previous autumn take their seats; and it is a strange sight, during the last session, to see the coming members watching the retiring ones in the discharge of their duties. They are admitted to the floor of the House, and freely offer advice to their quasi-colleagues, who must feel extremely grateful.

To conclude: a seat in the House cannot be resigned, for the same reason that a peerage, once conferred, cannot be got rid of. But by the statute of 1707 members accepting any office of profit under the Crown vacate their seats (though the holders of certain offices may seek re-election): hence the origin of the Chiltern Hundreds. These Hundreds are Burnham, Desborough, and Stoke, an estate of the Crown on the chain of chalk hills that pass from east to west through the middle of Buckinghamshire, the stewardship whereof is a nominal office, with a salary of twenty shillings, conferred on members of Parliament when they wish to vacate their seats.

Captain Ortis' Booty: a Ballad.

CAPTAIN ORTIS (the tale I tell
Petit told in his chronicle),
Won from Alva, for service and duty,
At Antwerp's surrender the strangest booty.

Then each captain gained—as I hear—
That for guerdon he held most dear,
Chose what in chief he set heart of his on;
Out strode Ortis and claimed—the prison!

Such a tumult! For, be assured,
Greatly the judges and priests demurred;
No mere criminals alone in that Stygian
Darkness died, but the foes of religion.

There lay heretics by the score,
Anabaptists and many more
Hard to catch, but let loose when caught your
Timid squirrels, forego the torture

Never! Suddenly sank the noise;
Alva spoke in his steely voice:
"He's my soldier sans flaw or blemish,
Let him burn as he likes these Flemish!"

"Sire, as you please," the Governor said,
"Only King Philip's edict read——"
Alva spoke! "What is King or Cortes?"
"Open the portals!" cried Captain Ortis.

"Loose the prisoners; set them free:
Only—each pays a ransom fee."
Out, be sure, flowed the gold in buckets,
Piles on piles of broad Flanders ducats.

Ay, and there followed not gold alone;
Men and women and children thrown
In chains to perish came out forgiven,
Saw light, friends' faces, and thought it heaven.

Out they staggered, so halt and blind
From rack and darkness they scarce could find
The blessed gate where daughter and mother,
Father and brother, all found each other.

"Freedom! Our darlings! Let God be praised!"
So cried all; then said one amazed,
"Who is he under heaven that gave us
Thought and pity—who cared to save us?"

"Captain Ortis," the answer ran,
"The Spanish lancer. Here's the man.
Ay, but don't kill him with too much caressing;
Death's sour salad with sweetest dressing."

Danger indeed; for never had been
In brave old Antwerp such a scene,
Boldest patriot, fairest woman,
Blessing him, knelt to the Spanish foe-man.

Ortis looted his prize of gold.
And yet I think if the truth be told,
He found, when the ducats were gone with the pleasure,
That heretic blessing a lasting treasure.

Still my Captain, to certain eyes,
Seems war-hardened and worldly-wise;
"Twere for a hero (you say) more handsome
To give the freedom, nor take the ransom."

True; but think of this hero's lot,
 No Quixote he, nor Sir Launcelot;
 But a needy soldier half-starved, remember,
 With cold and hunger, that northern December.

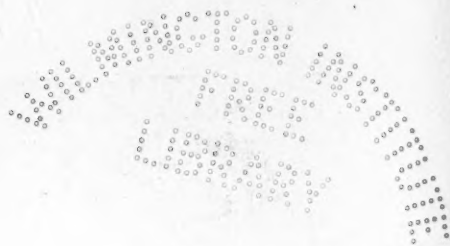
Just such an one as Parma meant,
 Writing to Philip in discontent:
 "Antwerp must yield to our men ere much longer,
 Unless you leave us to die of hunger.

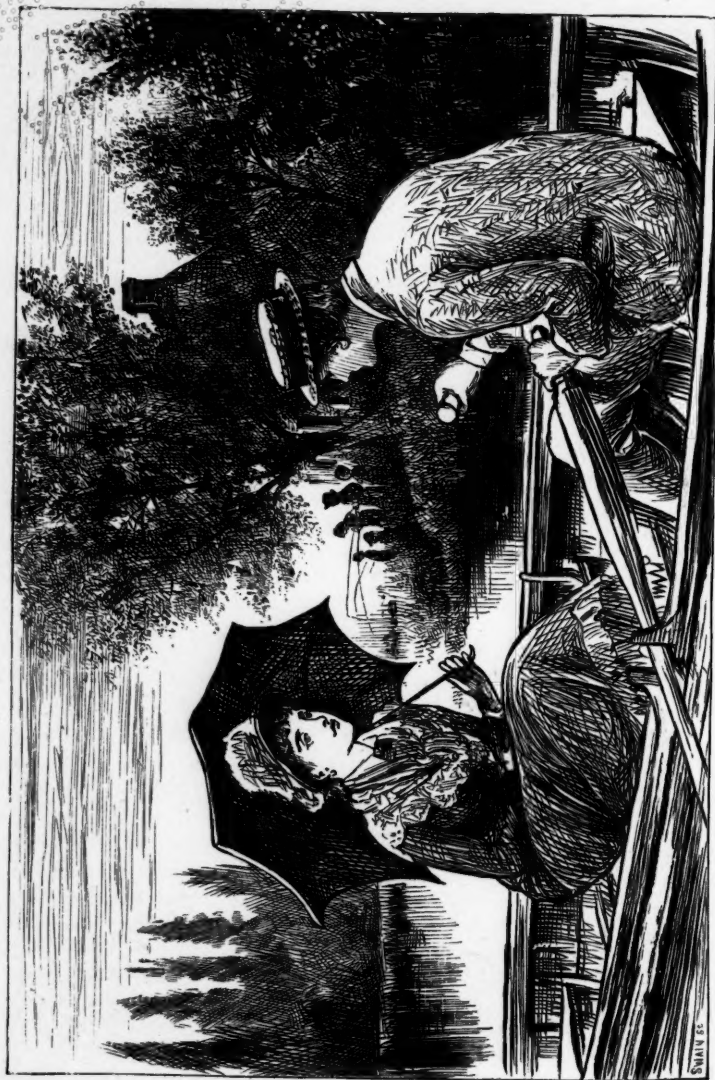
"Wages, raiment, they do without,
 Wine—fire even—they'll learn, no doubt,
 To live without meat for their mouths; they're zealous,
 Only they die first as yet, poor fellows."

Yes and I praise him, for my part,
 This man war-beaten and tough of heart,
 Who—scheming a booty, no doubt—yet planned it
 More like a saint, as I think, than a bandit.

What, my friend, is too coarse for you?
 Will nought less than a Galahad do?
 Well; far nobler, it seems, your sort is;
 But I—I declare for bold Captain Ortis!

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.





HONESTY, IT WAS NOT A BEAUTIFUL SCENE.

Mrs. Justin.

III.



MRS. Leicester troubled herself very little about her match-making. When she happened to observe Mrs. Austin and Mr. South, she thought they seemed to be very good friends; and when they were out of sight, she supposed that they were together somewhere, and getting on nicely. She did not quite know what she would get them for a wedding present, but she determined to run up to town with Frank, and look about her. There were sure to be pretty things in the shops. Meanwhile she was very well satisfied.

Frank seemed all right, and, that being so, Mrs. Leicester hardly noticed that, as the days went by, his little cousin was not quite her simple, happy self of a fortnight earlier, and that these two, who had been such allies, were no longer on their old footing.

Gilbert made no attempt to resume the talk which was broken off in the ruined castle. He appeared to have tacitly accepted Mrs. Austin's offer of friendship without explanations; and though from time to time he would turn to her with some allusion to the past, some "Do you remember?" which sent her thoughts away from Culverdale to scenes where he alone could follow, he touched always on those earlier recollections which needed no apology from him and no pardon from her. She would answer readily enough; but Gilbert, who remembered the time when she believed in him, was apt to imagine a delicate yet unmistakable irony in her untroubled smile. To Frank it revealed a wonderful, far-off tranquillity; but then Frank was very much in love. Mrs. Austin had opened his eyes, and he was prepared to spend his life in a rapturous study of this first miracle. He felt himself at a disadvantage with regard to South, who could look back to a past in which she had a share, instead of a degrading memory of measles and extreme youth; yet, in spite of his humility, he was not unhappy. Mrs. Austin could not fail to perceive his devotion, but she never for one moment supposed

that there was anything serious or lasting in it. It seemed to her like a little nosegay of spring flowers, which she might accept with a gracious word of thanks, and she was touched by the thought of its very transitoriness. She was very kind to Frank. Within a week she had learnt his ways, and looks, and words, as one might learn the few simple notes of a bird in one's garden; and yet they pleased her better than a more elaborate performance. "Poor fellow!" she would say to herself, with a half whimsical regret, "it is not my fault—I cannot help it; but if he only knew *how* young he seems to me, how he would hate me!" There, however, she was wrong. Frank would have forgiven her even that.

The warm September days slipped away one after the other, and the only thing of which the young lover could complain was that they were shortened in a quite unjustifiable way, which was not mentioned in the almanac. The sun was slow to rise; but when once breakfast-time had arrived, he rushed across the heavens, went headlong down the west, and Frank found himself dressing for dinner, with the certainty that only a few short hours parted him from bed-time. It is true that the nights had grown long, so long that they could not all be spent in sleep. His light burnt late, and even when it was extinguished it did not follow that he was at rest. Sometimes he was star-gazing. He had never taken such particular notice of the stars before, but they attracted him now because they reminded him of Mrs. Austin. He had made the discovery that certain things—besides old teapots—were in harmony with Mrs. Austin, and consequently possessed something of her charm; and he was beginning a classification of the contents of the universe, as tried by this test. He felt that the midnight sky was very sublime, and that he himself was absurdly unimportant. How could he become more worthy of notice? What sort of destinies used people to fancy they read in the stars? Frank, as he leaned against his window and fixed his eyes upon the far-off points of light, reflected that in all probability he would be High Sheriff one of these days. He wondered whether Mrs. Austin would like a man to be Sheriff. But that would only be for a year. Perhaps it would be better to try to get into Parliament. There was a neighbouring borough which was something of a forlorn hope—he might try that. There must be an election before long; perhaps Mrs. Austin would come down, wear his colours, encourage his supporters, and rejoice in his victory. Only—confound it!—the ballot had spoilt all the fun, and there was no chance of a real good contest, such as they used to have in old times, when the flags were flying, the money going, and the agents outwitting each other for days together. He would have liked the gathering excitement of a prolonged battle; he would not even have minded a little rioting; in fact, an unfriendly mob, howling down any attempt at speech, and to be confronted only with good-humoured coolness and the superior manners of a gentleman, seemed less terrible to Frank than cold-blooded voters, asking questions about his views on unexpected subjects. Nevertheless, for Mrs. Austin's sake, he would

face even that ordeal. He remembered, moreover, that the father of one of the neighbouring landowners had been made a baronet—why might not he be made a baronet? It is true that, for his own part, he had no especial desire to be called “Sir Francis,” but “Lady Leicester” seemed to him a name not unworthy to be uttered softly, at night, in the presence of the stars.

Mrs. Austin knew nothing of these soaring dreams, which only awaited a word from her lips to become serious intentions. She had no particular ambition on Frank's behalf; in fact, the young squire and his surroundings seemed to her almost ideally perfect. The very heaviness of life at Culverdale pleased her; there was something solid, respectable, and sincere about it; a sense of prosperous restfulness and security rooted deeply in the earth, that she found charming—for a fortnight. She liked to walk with Frank under his spreading trees, and call up faint visions of wives and sisters of bygone squires, who had known those great trunks as slender saplings, and lived and died under their gradually widening shadows. She could even find names for a few of these phantoms, for she had been to the neat little church (Frank's father had restored it), and had seen their monuments, with urns, and cherubs, and festoons of marble drapery upon the walls. It was strange to look at Frank, with the sunshine glancing through a little lancet window on his head; and to think that he too would have a tablet on those neat cold walls one day, and that other guests would stay at the Hall, and come on Sundays, and study it during service time. Frank, at her elbow, read the responses, with a consciousness of his importance to the Established Church, which might have been absurd if it had not been so simple and honest. He sat through the sermon in an attitude expressive of deeper interest than Mrs. Austin found practicable. How was she to know that the whole of that discourse, as the young man heard it, was about herself?

For her own part, she had dreams, but, less happy than Frank, her dreams were of the past instead of the future. When Gilbert South had asked her if she remembered the old time at West Hill, she had answered, “Perfectly.” It was quite true; the picture was there, but it had not been called up for years as his words called it up. Even when he did not speak, the knowledge that it was continually in his thoughts seemed to give it a kind of independent existence. Mrs. Austin found herself recalling it in idle moments, and dwelling on all manner of little incidents and details which had been thrust into the background by later events. The old house and garden rose up before her as she knew them in her childish days; the gateway hung with ivy, the apple-tree, under her bed-room window, warped, and leaning away from the strong west winds; the countless blossoms of narcissus and daffodil in early spring. She remembered the hoarse roar of the sea as she lay in bed on stormy nights, the shrieking of the hurrying gusts, the fierce lashing of the driven drops upon the pane, and then the stillness and the rain-washed sweetness of the morning when she woke. It all came back to her, even

to the tufts of fern, and the small green leaf-cups growing on the garden wall; but it came back with that peculiar charm of tender remembrance which, combining many impressions of that which we have lost, creates one more beautiful than all. She saw it with a deeper colour in the sea, a wilder splendour of sunsets, a pearly clearness in the morning sky, and a wonderful purity in the lucid depths of air. More than once since she came to Culverdale, it had chanced to her, falling asleep at night, while poor Frank was seeking his fortune in the stars, to dream that she saw Gilbert coming towards her along the grassy path. It was almost impossible to wake from such a dream, and not to look with curious interest at the real man when he came down to breakfast.

With all these pre-occupations, it was hardly surprising that Mrs. Austin did not give much thought to Tiny Vivian, beyond a vague and general good-will, which the girl did not return. Tiny had never changed her mind about Mrs. Austin. "I said I shouldn't like her, and I don't," she triumphantly repeated, one day as she stood talking to Frank.

"It's a fine thing to be consistent, isn't it?" said Frank, drily.

"It's much better than changing one's mind for ever. I can't see anything so very wonderful about her. Of course, she has been good-looking, but so have lots of people, according to what they say. And anybody might talk in that affected way, as if her words were much more precious than anybody else's. It makes me cross."

"So I see."

"I could talk like that, and walk like that too! Look here." And Tiny swept round the room in an imitation of Mrs. Austin, which would have been very tolerable to anybody but Frank.

"Oh, of course!" he said. "That's always the way. Let one woman get hold of another, and one knows what to expect."

"And pray what does one expect?"

"Well, neither justice nor mercy. I suppose you can't help it."

"Oh indeed!" said Tiny. "Then I should like to know what Mrs. Austin says of me!"

"As far as I know she doesn't say anything," he answered coolly.

Tiny was pained at Frank's manner, but she looked him in the face and smiled only the more resolutely. "No," she said, "of course she doesn't. That's just what I say. She's awfully stuck up and cold. I can quite understand her jilting Mr. South."

"How do you know she did jilt Mr. South?" he inquired in an irritating tone.

"Why, Frank, didn't she go and marry that other man? Of course she jilted him, and she'd do it again just as likely as not, only I hope he won't give her the chance. He's worth fifty of her! Oh my goodness!" Tiny exclaimed with a burst of defiant laughter, "what a regiment that would be!"

It was quite right that Tiny should speak up for Mr. South, since but for him she would have stood a chance of being somewhat neglected.

Gilbert, however, would not suffer that. Apart from the fact that he found Tiny very fascinating, with her great eager eyes, her quick smiles, and the supreme charm of being still in her teens, he could never endure to see any one slighted. His nature was sweet and kindly to the core, and he was always ready to give the sympathy, which, to say the truth, he required rather lavishly. He liked to talk about himself in tones of confidential melancholy, slightly dashed with bitterness. But he would talk to you just as readily about yourself, showing a gentle warmth of interest which was flattering and agreeable. This kind of thing was new to Tiny. Frank was not in the habit of saying much about his inner feelings, and certainly would not have known what to make of Tiny's if she had attempted to express them. Perhaps the girl had been less conscious of having such feelings to express before Mr. South came. It was new to her, too, being accustomed to play a subordinate part, in consequence of youth and inexperience, to meet with some one who considered youthful impressions of far greater value than the dull and blunted opinions of middle age. The squires and rectors about Culverdale did not express such views, nor did their wives and daughters set such value on the artless ideas of a girl who had been nowhere and known nobody. Tiny in a simple unthinking way had loved the country lanes and meadows among which she had been brought up, but with Mr. South's arrival came a quickened consciousness of their beauty and of her feelings about them. She was already a little less simple in consequence of his worship of simplicity, and her great brown eyes were more eager, and sometimes more thoughtful.

The time passed on till Mrs. Austin's visit was within three days of its close. She was to leave Culverdale on the Thursday, and this was the Monday evening, when a garden-party at the house of some friends of the Leicesters' ended in an impromptu dance. Gilbert came up to her as she sat fanning herself, and watching the revolving couples. She shook her head in answer to his request. "Don't ask me," she said. "I haven't danced for years." And she glanced, not without a touch of amusement, at Frank, who had already been rejected, and who stood a little way off, very erect and melancholy.

"Why not?" said Gilbert.

"My dancing days are over," she replied simply. "Go and dance with some of these young people. I see plenty of pretty girls who will be quite ready for a new partner."

He neither moved nor answered, and she turned her head and looked up at him from her low chair. He stood by her side with downcast eyes, pulling his moustache with what would have looked almost like an air of irritation, if she had not known that he was never really out of temper. His expression and attitude reminded her of old days, when he was apt to be offended for a moment because some one had laughed at him, and he never liked to be laughed at. But after a brief pause she looked at him more attentively. Old use had taught her to read Gilbert's face

like an open book, more readily than any other face on earth, yet there was something perplexing in it now. Did he care so much to dance with her? She leaned back and waited, knowing that he was sure to speak before long.

"It is always the same thing," he said presently. "This is over, and that is over. And when I remember you everything was just beginning."

"But that was a long while ago—as I think we have frequently remarked."

Gilbert's eyes were fixed on a bit of scarlet geranium which had fallen on the floor. "Yes," he said, "I have missed everything somehow."

"One would think you were a second Rip van Winkle, you seem to find it so hard to realise the lapse of time. You haven't by chance been asleep for a dozen years or so, have you?"

"Upon my word I don't know. I think perhaps I may have been." He moved the bit of red blossom with his foot, and studied it under its new aspect. "Asleep and dreaming perhaps," he said in a low voice.

"Well," Mrs. Austin replied, "as far as I am concerned there is no great difficulty. Since you know the year in which I was born, you have only to buy an almanac, or to look at the top of a newspaper, and I think you will be able to calculate that I am thirty-seven."

"Oh, I know that very well. You will not let me forget it."

"Will not let you forget it? Could you forget it if I would let you?"

"No," said South, lowering his voice still more. "I don't suppose I could. I have learnt my lesson, I think. But I can swear to you that I never remembered it till you taught me."

The music stopped abruptly as he spoke, and seemed to make a sudden vacancy in the air, into which there poured a confused murmur of voices and sweeping of dresses as the dancers strolled by. Among them, with a carmine flush on her soft brown cheek, went Tiny Vivian, and raised her long lashes for one brilliant glance as she passed. "Miss Vivian looks especially well to-night," Mrs. Austin remarked, looking after her, and Gilbert murmured some reply, but the expression which had perplexed his companion deepened on his face. Her attention was distracted for a moment by the arrival of the master of the house, a stout white-whiskered old gentleman, who benignantly expressed the opinion that it was a pleasant sight to see the young people enjoying themselves. When she had agreed with him as completely as he could wish, she looked quickly round, but the tall figure had vanished from her side.

He had gone away to follow once more a useless round of thought which had grown drearily familiar to him of late. He was haunted by the memories which he had called up. He had tried to bring them to life again, and instead they flitted round him like mocking ghosts to be seen but never to be touched. Those happy days in Cornwall were like the opening of a poem, but it had ended in the flattest and feeblest prose. At twenty he was to have been a hero, at thirty-nine he was nothing,

and knew that he never would be anything. The experience was not remarkable, but in most cases the contrast is rendered endurable by the gentle influence of time. We become accustomed to it before it is so terribly defined, and half forget the splendour of the starting-point before we reach the pitiful goal. But South was not so fortunate. He saw them both, and saw them always, in Mildred's eyes.

As he stood by the door gazing idly round, his glance suddenly encountered Tiny Vivian's. She looked at him as if she dimly divined his trouble, but turned away her head the moment he noticed her, and yet that swift glance, with its vague proffer of sympathy, came like a ray of light into his dull perplexity. Tiny's eyes, at least, had no reflection of a mocking past in them, and never told him that he was a failure.

IV.

It happens occasionally that an unexpected chill will suddenly depress us, an undefinable blight which seems to come from nowhere in particular and to be everywhere. The weather may have something to do with it, but the chill is within us as well as without, and the outward aspect of things can only emphasise its dreariness.

Something of the kind befell the inhabitants of the Manor House on the Tuesday morning. Every one was dull, the sky was clouded, and the world seemed to have grown old. Gilbert South had a harassed and weary expression, Tiny owned to a headache, Mrs. Leicester was worried by the knowledge that fifteen people were coming to dinner, and that she must keep awake all the evening, and Frank was conscious of nothing but the shadow of Mrs. Austin's approaching departure. Mrs. Austin herself was inclined to think that she had had more than enough of Culverdale. She had never known a place which depended so much on the sunshine for what beauty it possessed, and, in the uniformly diffused shadow, the low-lying park and the meadows with their lines of hedge and ditch oppressed her with a sense of unendurable monotony. There was really nothing to distinguish one enclosure from another, unless it were the presence of cows or sheep. One would have said that the soil of Frank's inheritance was heavy with the dulness of many generations, which rose on sunless days like an exhalation, not precisely poisonous, since good family feelings and respectable virtues would take no harm in it, but far too dense for winged and delicate fancies. Consequently there was no chance of escaping from it even in thought. In truth there seemed no limit to its influence. Mrs. Austin, while she dressed, looked across the river to the village, and saw how the church stood solidly planted among its white gravestones, and pointed with a sharp little spire to a grey and dreary region on high. It was hardly an encouraging prospect.

Frank, poor fellow, suffered from her depression. He was too closely connected with his surroundings to be a congenial companion on such a

day; his acres burdened him and dragged him down, and he found her not unkind, but languid and cold. Gilbert South might perhaps have called up other scenes and times by the mere sound of his voice, but he was silent at breakfast-time, and disappeared almost immediately afterwards. It was vaguely understood that he had important letters to write. And, after all, Mrs. Austin was not very sure that she needed any company. As she sat in the drawing-room, turning the pages of a novel as an excuse for silence, she half unconsciously followed a thread of thought which stretched backward to her girlish days and onward to her future. She was still pursuing it in the afternoon when she drove with Tiny Vivian to the neighbouring town to make some purchases for Mrs. Leicester.

The little town remained in her memory as a picture, as places sometimes do, which, being seen but once, in one mood and under one aspect, are not blurred and confused by conflicting impressions. The sullen clouds were as much a part of it as the foot-worn pavement, and a man with an organ, grinding a tune which had been popular a season or two before, was just as important as the vicar who went by with a bundle of little tracts, and bowed to Miss Vivian. The carriage stopped and went on as Tiny directed, the tradesmen started out of their shops as if somebody had pulled a string, and stood bareheaded and smiling at the door while she consulted Mrs. Leicester's list of commissions. At one place she went in, and Mrs. Austin was left alone in a little square. The Town Hall was there, ERECTED MDCCCLIII., and there also was a drinking-fountain with an inscription which she could not read. The great clock overhead struck four like a knell, and startled her just as she was thinking that Gilbert South certainly was not a hero, and yet—. And a moment later Tiny came out and said "Home" to the coachman.

They did not talk much as they drove back. When the lodge-keeper swung the gate open at the sound of their approach, it occurred to Mrs. Austin to wonder what Tiny had been thinking about so intently all the time.

That evening, after dinner, South came to her and stood for a few minutes turning over some photographs which lay at her elbow. One of them was of a place which he knew and she did not, and in answer to a question of hers he described it. He pressed his hand on the table as he spoke, and a white scar across one of his fingers stood out more prominently and caught Mrs. Austin's eye.

"That cut of yours left a mark," she said, when he had finished. "How frightened I was—do you remember?"

Gilbert looked first at his hand and then at her, with a strange, startled expression, almost as if he felt a throb of pain in his old wound. "Yes," he said, "I remember." And all at once the colour came into his face as if he were a boy again. "I was cutting a stick for your brother Jack," he added hurriedly, "and the knife slipped. Your mother tied it up for me."

"Yes, we found her in her store-room. I think Jack thought you were going to die." Mrs. Austin, for a moment, instead of seeing seven or eight country gentlemen, most of them bald, and as many ladies, grouped in the Culverdale drawing-room, saw a sunshiny room, full of shelves and cupboards and boxes, where her mother, with capable hands, was bandaging that finger of Gilbert's, while Jack (poor fellow! he died at school) stood looking on, scared at first, and then, when he found that mother could set it all right, a little aggrieved because after all he hadn't got his stick. Oh, how long ago it all was, and how sadly the old home was broken up! She would have liked to take Gilbert's left hand in hers and hold it, just for the sake of that little scar and the dear people who were dead. And how deeply the memory of that time touched him! Why did he colour up so suddenly at her question and turn away? Was there something special about this one incident? All at once it struck her that hitherto it had been Gilbert, and not she, who had said "Do you remember?" Was he so pleased that she should say it? She recollected, too, that it was while he still had his hand bandaged that he spoke to her one evening by the white roses, and she promised to wait for him till he should come back to the old home. Perhaps that remembrance had called up his blush. Poor Gilbert, could he never forget his boyish inconstancy!

Mrs. Leicester heaved a deep sigh of relief when her guests were gone. "Dear me!" she said suddenly to Mrs. Austin, "is to-morrow really your last day with us? What are you all going to do to-morrow?"

There was a pause. "Are not we going to row down the river to some farm-house?" Mrs. Austin inquired, looking round.

"To old Green's," said Frank.

"Speak for yourself, my dear," said Mrs. Leicester, laughing and nodding. "You don't catch me rowing down rivers. I shall have to die some day, I suppose, but there are plenty of ways of doing it without being drowned."

"Drowned?" Mrs. Austin repeated, with a glance at Frank.

"My mother wouldn't venture on a ditch in a lifeboat without making her will and saying good-by to me," he answered.

"No," Mrs. Leicester replied, in a tone of cheerful assent. "I'm a coward about the water. It's a very good thing everybody isn't like me. I'm sure I should never have found America or Australia or any of those places."

"No," said Frank, "nor the Isle of Wight. You might have seen it was there, like the moon."

"I thought you said you must go to the Carletons to-morrow," said Tiny, in a low voice, to Mrs. Leicester.

"Good gracious, so I must. I forgot. And you must go there with me, you know."

"I won't drown you, if you'll trust me," said Frank to Mrs. Austin.

"I'm not afraid," she smiled. "But you see it seems as if nobody would be able to go."

"You said you should like it," Frank persisted, turning his back to the others, and looking fixedly at her.

"It would be very pleasant if it is a fine day," she replied quietly. "But I don't want you to go entirely for me. I thought we were all going."

"I am going, anyhow," he said, "to-morrow or the next day. I want to speak to Green. Of course you will do what you like best. I thought you said you would like it."

"I am so sorry I must take Tiny," said Mrs. Leicester. "Old Mrs. Carleton is her godmother, and she wants to see her, so I really must. What will you do? Will you come with us, or will you go with Frank? I'm sure he is always very careful, and of course there isn't any danger really."

Mrs. Austin had no desire to make Frank miserable on the last day of her stay. "Oh, I should like the row very much if it is fine," she said.

"That's settled then," said Mrs. Leicester cheerfully. "Mr. South, if there's nothing you want to do to-morrow, I'm sure we shall either of us be very pleased if you'll join us."

Frank scowled. But Gilbert, while he professed his delighted readiness to go anywhere or do anything, had not the slightest intention of proposing to make one of the water party. He was convinced that it would be fraught with peril—for him. "That hot-headed boy would certainly do his best to upset me into the river if I interfered with his arrangements," he said to himself. "If he could contrive to give me a ducking, without splashing her, it would fill his soul with pure delight." Gilbert thought he would call on old Mrs. Carleton, who was unlikely to indulge in any such pranks.

Mrs. Leicester was really sorry that she was obliged to break up the party on this last day. She could not see for her part why Mildred and Mr. South had not settled matters a week ago, and enjoyed themselves comfortably as an engaged couple, taking their share of privileges and joking remarks. But she supposed it was to be put off till the end of Mildred's visit, and she was anxious to give Gilbert a chance of coming to the point. She had noticed that Frank seemed to prefer Mrs. Austin to Mr. South, and was inclined to bestow the attention which should have been divided between his guests entirely on her. Frank was inconsiderate at times, but she would give him a quiet hint to leave the two to themselves when they came back from their respective expeditions.

Gilbert South, unconscious of her beneficent schemes, woke the next morning to a dreary certainty that his visit to Culverdale had been a mistake from first to last. For years he had remembered Mildred Fairfax as the truest, the most loving, the most beautiful of womankind. He had dreamed of seeing her again, their meeting had been the one desirable possibility of his life. At last it had come; and he had found

her no longer young, beautiful still in her widowhood, but pale, calm, clear-sighted, self-possessed, putting aside his attempt to utter his repentance with gentle words about friendship. Frank might well worship her in his boyish fashion; he was quite right, he had never seen Mildred Fairfax. But for his own part, Gilbert, had he known her intentions, instead of gratefully blessing good Mrs. Leicester, would rather have been inclined to complain to her, very ungratefully and unjustly, "You have

Unsettled the pure picture in my mind;
A girl, she was so perfect, so distinct.
. . . I detest all change,
And most a change in aught I loved long since."

That was the worst of it. He could not even go back to his dream. Call them up as he would with anxious efforts, his memories of his old love had been slowly dying, day by day, ever since he came to Culverdale. The actual recollections remained, cold, dead facts, but nothing more. There were moments when Tiny Vivian, just because of her youth and hopefulness, seemed nearer the true spirit of his former love than Mrs. Austin. It was not unnatural. If we idealise the past, and most of us do, there is an interval after which old books should not be reopened, old haunts should not be revisited, nor old loves sought out, except with a deliberate view to disenchantment. We expect too much. No sympathy is so perfect as that which we imagine. And Gilbert South had been especially fanciful and dreamy in his recollections. He had had, as it were, just a glimpse of Mildred's pure, girlish love, and then he had been drawn away by a woman older than himself who wanted a little amusement. He had been made a fool of, coarsely, by a practised flirt. Afterwards he attempted to go back; he wrote a dozen letters of explanation and repentance, and of course sent off the worst. It was a failure, and partly in pique, partly in real disgust at himself, for he had a delicate taste, and his first faithlessness left an unpleasant flavour in his mouth, he swore constancy to Mildred's memory as he supposed, but in reality to himself as he would have had himself. It was that former self as well as his former love he had hoped to find again when he met Mrs. Austin.

With her it was different. She had trusted him and he had failed her; the pain had been keen, but with a touch of scorn in it. And later, when the wound was healed and all bitterness gone, she thought of him, not unkindly, but as one whose nature was light and fickle. When she discovered how constantly he had looked back to that old love which she supposed was utterly forgotten, her memory awoke like the autumn blossoming of spring flowers.

On that last day all the interest seemed to be concentrated on the water expedition, as if it were indeed a voyage of vast importance. Nobody thought about the people who meant to call on old Mrs. Carleton, but one would have said that Frank and Mrs. Austin were

going to discover a new island at least, and indeed the young fellow had such an impression concerning it as, if it happens to be verified, we call a presentiment. Mr. South and Tiny came down to the river to see them off, but, owing to some little delay in Frank's arrangement, they were obliged to go back, lest they should keep Mrs. Leicester waiting, and leave Mrs. Austin where she stood, a slim dark figure at the water's edge. The dull grey surface, with its floating leaves and its grasses drawn by the silent current, was shaded by great groups of trees, whose dusky greenness was lighted here and there by gleams of autumn yellow. Mrs. Austin did not move, no breath of wind stirred the dark masses of foliage overhead; it was like a picture with something of melancholy stateliness about it. When Frank was ready the solitary figure disappeared from the bank, and they went gliding from under the shadow of the trees out into the wide, sunless fields.

Honestly, it was not a very beautiful scene. To Frank, who had known it all his life, the question of its beauty or ugliness did not occur; it was simply *the* river, and as such it had moulded his conception of all rivers. On its dull waters such childish dreams as he had known had embarked and set sail. As a boy he had fished there, just as four or five urchins were fishing now. They stared, open-mouthed and silent, at young Mr. Leicester and his boat, but took no notice of the lady who looked with a musing smile at the little rustic group as she went by. Presently came a curve in the stream, where a clump of alders grew, and bushes leaned despondently over the water which was eating the earth away from their roots. The more distant prospect showed a monotonous variety of ploughed land and pasture, with lines of trees following the hedges, and here and there a cottage or two and a bit of road. Mrs. Austin and Frank talked as they went. He told her how one bitter winter the river was frozen, and he skated to the farm where they were going now. He pointed out a lonely house, and spoke of the people who lived there. He showed her how far the floods had reached in a wet season, a muddy expanse in which little files of cropped willows seemed to wade knee-deep, and the water washed through the gates of lost meadows. And he broke off suddenly in the midst of what he was saying to ask, "Where shall you be this time to-morrow?"

"Half-way to London, I should think," she answered; "I don't know how long the journey takes."

Frank looked at her and was silent. He wondered whether he should speak as they came back.

The Greens' house stood by the roadside a little way from the river. The farm-buildings and some big stacks had a pleasant prosperous air, but the house itself was an ugly little plastered box, with a bit of treeless garden in front, blossoming with prim sulphur-coloured dahlias. Frank did not seem to have much to say to old Green after all. The two exchanged a few words, and then came to the little parlour, where Mrs. Austin sat on a horsehair sofa giving the latest news of Mrs.

Leicester and Miss Vivian to the farmer's wife. Frank was on very pleasant terms with his tenants, who evidently thought their young landlord a most important personage. Other people were "high," but vaguely "high," and a duke would not have impressed Mrs. Green as much as Mr. Leicester from the Manor House. The Prince of Wales, perhaps, as a young man residing in palaces, and holding a well-defined position as the Queen's son, might have eclipsed Frank, but it would have taken a prince to do it. Mrs. Austin perceived, with a slight smile, how unimportant she was compared with her companion, but she was not in a mood to be amused by that or anything else that afternoon. She was glad to leave the house, to escape from hospitable offers of cake and home-made wine, and to find herself once more upon the road. Even then, however, the old farmer insisted that Frank should look at a shed which was not satisfactory, and she had to wait while the matter was discussed.

There was a little pond with neat white railings just opposite the house, and she strolled across and stood by it with a mysterious sense of loneliness and desolation upon her. Still as the afternoon was, she fancied that there was a mournful little rustling in the boughs of a stunted oak which grew a few yards away. The little pool mirrored a vacant grey sky. It was absurd, and yet she felt as if she would have given anything to see Gilbert South coming towards her, instead of which it was Frank, who tore himself away from the farmer and darted across the road.

"I've kept you waiting," he said; "I'm so sorry! Oh, and you are tired, aren't you?"

"A little," she allowed. "Nothing to matter."

"It's too bad of me! What can I do?" he exclaimed with anxious solicitude. "Come in again and let Mrs. Green make you some tea."

"Oh no, no," she said. "I would rather go back."

Frank was in despair. "What a brute I am!" he reproached himself.

Mrs. Austin fairly laughed at the intensity of his remorse. "What would you do if I were very tired?" she said.

He hardly dared to speak to her as they went back, and perhaps it was owing to that enforced silence that later he recalled with especial vividness the plash of his oars on their quietly winding way, the little ripples dying among the dry autumnal reeds on either bank, and the light from the west, where a pale sun struggled feebly through the clouds, falling coldly on the beautiful face before him. For Mrs. Austin, meanwhile, a soft current of thought flowed with the river, setting ever more strongly towards a final resolution. If it rested with her to make Gilbert South happy, why should she not do it? He was not what she had once imagined him, yet he was truer and better than she had believed him during the years they had been parted. There was no man living whose thoughts and memories, nay, whose little tricks of speech and gesture, were bound up with her past life as Gilbert's were; and the

recollection of his troubled face haunted her like a reproach, "Why not?" she said to herself over and over again, to the measured sound of Frank's oars. "Why not?—why not?—if it would make him happy."

"I don't know why it is," she said to young Leicester, when they had landed, and were walking slowly up to the house, "but I have had a feeling all this afternoon as if something were going to happen."

"That's funny," said Frank; "so have I."

"Have you really? If I had known that, I might have wondered whether you were really going to drown me. But here we are, safely landed, in spite of our forebodings."

He surveyed the sullen sky. "Perhaps there's thunder in the air," he suggested.

"Perhaps. That might account for my feeling tired. I've been a dull companion, I fear."

"No," Frank was beginning to say, when he stopped short. They had just come in sight of the house, and he stared at a farmer's chaise, driven by a labouring man, which was going away from the front door. "That's old Clayton's trap," he said; "what on earth has that come here for? And—why, surely that's my mother coming to meet us—they can't possibly have been there and got back by this time!"

"There has been an accident!" said Mrs. Austin with sudden certainty. "Go and see what has happened. Your mother is safe, but —"

Frank ran forward. It was his mother hurrying down the drive. "What is it?" he said.

"Oh, Frank!" she cried. "Oh, my dear boy! Those dreadful horses!"

"What's the matter? The new horses?"

"Yes. We went by Upton Lane because I wanted to inquire about Barker's wife—by the railway cutting, you know. She likes to see one if it's only for a minute—at least, she did like, poor thing!"

Frank stamped impatiently. "—Barker's wife!" he said. "Is anybody hurt? Is anybody dead?"

"She's dead—she died yesterday—nobody else."

"Oh, go on! go on! What happened?"

"Why I went in just to speak to poor Barker——" Barker's final destiny was so nearly settled that Mrs. Leicester gasped and hurried on—"and the express rushed by, at least I think it was the express—they shouldn't make them scream so, Frank, it isn't whistling, it's a downright scream—and the horses bolted down the lane to the left, and he couldn't hold them——"

"The lane to the gravel-pit!" said Frank, in a horror-struck voice.

"Yes! And Tiny and Mr. South! But they dashed against a bit of wall at the turning, and were thrown out."

"Are they hurt? Much?"

"No, nobody is hurt, only shaken. But, oh, Frank!"

"The horses?" said Frank, greatly relieved.

"Nothing much. Robinson says it's quite wonderful. There's no harm done."

"What then?" Frank grasped his mother's arm. "There's something more. Tiny is hurt—I know she is. Why don't you say so?"

"No, she isn't; she isn't indeed, nor Mr. South either."

"Well?"

"They are not hurt," said Mrs. Leicester desperately, "but they're engaged to be married!"

She looked as if she expected an explosion, but none followed. Frank's hand unclosed and dropped by his side, and he stood for a moment staring dumbly at her. "Are you sure you didn't fall out too, and pitch on your head?" he said at last.

"No, indeed; I was in the cottage when the train came. Oh, it's quite true, Frank. You know I really couldn't help it. Are you angry?"

"Angry?" he repeated, "why should I be angry? I'm dreaming I think. It isn't a joke?" he said suddenly with a threatening frown.

"No! oh no! Is it wrong, do you think? What could I do?"

"Tiny and South!" said Frank. "Tiny! Well—if she likes him! I don't see why it should be wrong," he went on, bewildered, yet beginning to perceive how in some ways it might be marvellously right. "That's for her own people to decide. If they haven't any objection. But Tiny and South!"

"You are not angry then? You don't mind?"

"No, why should I? If Tiny is happy it's all right. But I don't seem able to believe it yet."

"Well, here is Mr. South," said Mrs. Leicester more cheerfully. "Perhaps you'll believe him."

Frank looked up and saw South coming across the grass. He was pale, but there was a peculiar brightness about his face. His eyes were shining, he smiled a little defiantly. Surprise is not the easiest thing in the world to encounter, especially if one is a little surprised at oneself. Gilbert had only just found himself out. Before Frank could take a step to meet him, Mrs. Austin, who had come up during the explanation, went forward swiftly and held out her hand.

"Gilbert, is this true?" she said. "I may congratulate you, not only on your fortunate escape, but on your engagement too?"

(Mrs. Leicester in the background arched her eyebrows and looked at Frank. "I had forgotten her!" she whispered.)

South ceased to smile, but he met her questioning eyes honestly enough. "Yes," he said slowly, "it's quite true." He looked at her as if he would have said more.

"Then I wish you all happiness—I wish it with all my heart," she replied. There was no tremor in her soft clear voice. "I think our old friendship gives me the right to be one of the first to congratulate you."

"Thank you," Gilbert replied confusedly. He still held her hand, and looked anxiously at her as if he feared some hidden meaning in her

words. "Mildred!" he said, and there was a world of pleading in his tone. "Tell me—" he stopped short. What was he going to say?

"Believe me," she said, and he felt her fingers tighten on his in a kindly clasp as she spoke, "I have always wished your happiness—always. And I am glad to think that you have found it." And with that she nodded a smiling little farewell and walked towards the house.

Gilbert gazed after her with a throb of regretful pain. He had known that it was impossible to go back to the old days, Mildred had taught him that. And yet as he looked over his shoulder at her retreating figure, he had a strange fancy that it was the very past itself, the past which he had so long worshipped and from which he had so suddenly awakened, which was at that moment leaving him for ever, a stately shape passing silently away and never looking back. He would not have recalled her, since he could not recall the Mildred who believed in him and looked at him with happy hope in her eyes. It was Tiny who believed in him now. Mildred had no need of him. Tiny had called to him, "*Gilbert!*" in their peril that afternoon, and his heart had answered the innocently appealing cry, the name by which she had never called him, uttered as her one word then. Tiny had no need to grudge his old love that one backward glance. It was all over in a moment, and Gilbert drew a long breath, and went forward to receive Frank's congratulations.

They were rather briefly and bluntly given. Frank was eager to be gone; the picture which for Gilbert personified a softly sentimental regret was for him a vision of hope, which beckoned him to follow. He uttered such good wishes as came readily to his lips, and were suitable to anybody who was going to be married. He realised the accident by the gravel-pit more clearly than the engagement, but he was too impatient and preoccupied to talk much even about that. "It's a mercy you weren't killed!" he said shortly.

"Well, I suppose it was a narrow escape," Gilbert answered with a smile.

"A narrow escape—yes, I should think so. It couldn't very well have been much narrower, as far as I can see. However, a miss is as good as a mile, I suppose."

"So they say," Gilbert replied; "but, for my own part, I should prefer the mile next time. And so would your cousin, I fancy."

"Ah, Tiny knew what you were coming to! It's no wonder if she was scared, poor child!" said Frank. "There isn't a nastier place about here. By the way, I haven't seen Tiny yet." And he brushed past Gilbert and departed, as if to congratulate Tiny were the one object of life.

He went by the stable-yard, where he speedily ascertained that the amount of damage done was so absurdly small that there was nothing serious about the whole business, except what might have been. He cut Robinson's explanations short, and hurried to the house, where, as luck

would have it, he met Tiny in the hall. She looked a little like Gilbert South, pale with agitation, and yet radiant. Her great brown eyes were shining, and her lips quivered with excitement, which might end either in sobs or smiles. "Oh, Frank!" she exclaimed; and she, too, looked up anxiously to see how the young master received the news.

"Well," said he, taking her hands in his; "this is a pretty afternoon's work! What will your people at home say, do you suppose?"

"Oh, my people at home! They'll say what I say," Tiny answered, with a tremulous laugh. "I shall make them."

"And what do you say?"

"Oh, Frank! isn't it strange? I'm so glad, but I want you to say you are glad too. Frank, you do like him now, don't you? You are not vexed?"

"No, I'm not vexed, if you are happy. Oh, I like him well enough. But I think you ought to have had somebody younger," he said, doubtfully.

"Oh, no, Frank," Tiny replied, with great decision. "It doesn't matter the least bit, when it's the man. If it were the woman, now, it would matter; but not when it's the man."

"Well, you know best." And Frank released one of his hands. "I'm sure I wish you all happiness. It comes rather suddenly," he said, with a laugh.

"So it did to me," Tiny replied; "and I'm not sure he would have told everybody directly, but we were in the Barkers' garden; we couldn't go in, because poor Mrs. Barker is dead, you know, and we were waiting till they got something to bring us home——"

"Oh, that's where it was settled!"

"Yes," Tiny answered, with a conscious little laugh. "No; I think it was settled as we tumbled out, but that was where he said it properly. And your mother came round the corner upon us——"

"I see," said Frank.

"They do grow such a lot of southernwood there," Tiny went on, as the colour rushed to her cheeks. "He leant against the palings, and there was a great bush of it. He smelt like a Sunday-school nosegay as we were coming back; but he says he shall always like it now."

The sight of Tiny, alive, laughing, and talking nonsense with quivering lips, suddenly brought the thought of her peril vividly before Frank. "Oh, Tiny!" he said, "you might have been killed!"

"Don't," she said; "I saw it all—the gravel-pit, you know, just as we went down into it one day; do you remember? Ever so long ago, almost the first time I stayed here. I saw it all, as if there were a terrible light in it, and I said to myself, 'I shall die there!' And then I called to Gilbert, and I remember his face for one moment, and we got to the turning, and before we could jump out it was all over; and there we were, picking ourselves up, and none the worse!"

"Thank God," said Frank.

"Only so dusty; and somehow I felt very small when I found it had all ended in nothing at all."

Frank laughed. "Never mind; it was better than being a smashed heroine."

"And it has ended in something, only a different sort of thing, hasn't it?" said Tiny. "Where is everybody, Frank? In the drawing-room?"

"Everybody? No; I left him with my mother, on the lawn."

Tiny made a face at him. "Oh, by the way, I know Mrs. Austin isn't there. I met her a minute ago, on the stairs, and she kissed me and congratulated me. I say, who told her?"

"She heard my mother telling me, I believe."

"Oh, I wondered if Gilbert had. Do you suppose she minds much?"

"I don't believe she minds at all," said Frank. "Why should she? She told him she was very glad."

"I believe she does mind, though," Tiny nodded. "She was very fond of talking about old times."

"Rubbish!" Frank exclaimed; "you're as bad as my mother!" and he walked off, leaving Tiny happily convinced that it was impossible Mrs. Austin should not envy her the possession of Gilbert's love.

"Now or never!" he said to himself as he went slowly up the stairs. His life hung in the balance, his heart was beating fast, and every throb brought him nearer the decisive moment. He turned into a little room where Mrs. Leicester and Tiny sometimes sat. He would lie in wait for Mrs. Austin there, she must pass the door as she went down.

Frank leant against the window, looking at the dim undulations of the landscape, and vaguely recognising familiar points. It was strange to stand in that little room which he had known all his life; he could remember learning his lessons there at his mother's knee—waiting for his fate to come to him. At any moment it might come, with a quiet step, and the soft sweeping of her dress in the passage. Before a dozen more of those strong heart-throbs were over, her eyes might be meeting his. She would look him in the face he knew, but what would she say to him? Frank had never thought less of himself than he did at that moment, and yet beneath all his anxiety he had an unreasoning faith in his good luck. Fortune had always been kind to him, people had always done what he wanted them to do. Yes, but Mrs. Austin was different. He dared not hope, and yet the mere thought that success was possible flushed him like a draught of wine. Then she would not be Mrs. Austin but—Mildred, he would not have to count days and nights as steps towards parting, they would all be his, other people would come and go, but she would stay. When she said "home" she would mean Culverdale. On that last thought he dwelt with exquisite delight, as if he could hear her uttering the word. It was the wildest dream, yet in a few minutes that dream might be his actual life; that was the wonder of it. And was

not fortune smiling on him already? He had been afraid of Gilbert South, he had had misgivings about Tiny's troubled eyes, and now just at the right moment all his doubts and fears had vanished away, he was free to go to his love, and she was free to come to him. There could be no shadow of reproach or regret between them.

He heard her footfall in the passage, he called "Mrs. Austin!" it paused, and she appeared on the threshold of the open door. He had been expecting her and watching for her, and yet when she came in answer to his call, he felt as if he were taken by surprise and had not a word to say. She stood in the doorway, waiting for him to speak, and on her delicate lips was that faint half smile which seemed to Frank to be the sum of all the poetry in the world. "What is it?" she said. "Did you want me?"

"Don't go down for a few minutes," he entreated. "I have something to say to you."

She looked unsuspectingly at him. "Some other time," she said, "I really must go to your mother."

"My mother? Oh, she will wait a few minutes for me!" And, before she could speak another word, Frank, with eager eyes, and stammering speech, was telling the story of his love. Even as he looked at her pale, startled face, before she had opened her lips to answer him, he knew that he had failed. And yet failure, now that it had actually come, seemed so incredible that Frank tried to avert it, by repeating what he had already said, as if every second which elapsed before she spoke was something gained. But all at once he stopped short, with a sense of the utter uselessness of any words.

"Oh, I am sorry!" said Mrs. Austin, meeting his eyes with a simple, tender sorrow in hers. She might have looked something the same if she had inadvertently hurt some dumb creature in the Culverdale woods.

"Don't!" said Frank.

"I never dreamed of this—never! I'm more sorry than words can say if anything I have said or done——"

"No!" Frank exclaimed. "You have done nothing wrong. If I'm a fool I don't know that it's my fault, but I'm sure it isn't yours!"

She could not help smiling, so gentle a smile that it could not wound him. "You must not think of this," she said. "It can't be. For one thing you must remember that you are a young man and I am an old woman. You will choose better one of these days—you have your life before you." She added after a moment, "Mine is behind me, at least the best of it."

"Don't talk like that!" said Frank. "What do a few years matter one way or the other? I would be older if I could, of course." (He could wish to be changed, but he could desire no change in her). "But I shall grow older," he said, trying to laugh.

She shook her head. "And so shall I!"

"If that is all," he exclaimed hotly, "it would be cruel——"

"But it isn't all. Believe me, Mr. Leicester, what you ask is impossible."

"I know I'm not good enough, but isn't there anything I could do? If I tried to get into Parliament—should you like me to do that?" said Frank desperately. His hurried thought sought any possible advancement that might make him more worthy in her eyes. "I'm not clever, of course, but surely a man must be good for something if he tries with all his heart. Tell me what you would like me to do, and I'll do it!"

He stood opposite her: his face was pale and keen with excitement: he looked so roused, so manly, so earnest, that for one moment the thought crossed Mrs. Austin's mind that if fate had but sent Frank instead of Gilbert into that earlier life of which she had spoken, he might have become such a hero as she had dreamed. But it was only a passing thought. Something told her that Frank, as he spoke, touched the highest point of which he was capable. It might be that he too felt that at that moment the flood of passion and resolution reached its limit, but he believed that the wave, if not repulsed, would have force enough to carry him onward through the lower waters of his later life.

"I think you are good for a great deal," she said, "but that isn't the question. You must believe me when I tell you that I am very sorry, but what you ask me can't be."

"You are quite sure? There is no chance for me?"

She paused for a moment, looking at him. Then, as if it pained her to speak that last word, she answered with a little negative movement of her head.

The eager expression died out of his eyes and his face relaxed. "Very well," he said. "Then I suppose there's nothing to do but to say good-by." He seemed to be making an effort to master himself, and Mrs. Austin looked aside at the window and waited till he should speak again.

"See here," he said, after a brief silence, "I shall tell my mother I have to go up to town on business this evening, but that I'm coming down to-morrow morning. I shall get away so, without any fuss, and to-morrow I shall telegraph that I'm detained, and I shan't come back for a day or two."

"Yes, I understand," she answered. "This is good-by. And when we meet again, I hope——"

Frank had taken up a pencil which happened to be lying on the table, dropped it, and stooped to find it on the floor. He rose with a slight flush on his cheek. "People don't always meet," he said. "Sometimes it's years first. Perhaps we never shall meet again."

"Perhaps not. That is possible of course." Mrs. Austin was a little puzzled by his manner.

The colour deepened on his face. "Well," he said, "why should we? If it must be all over, let it be all over!" He looked at her, crimsoning with the consciousness that he was saying something alto-

gether unlike his ordinary everyday talk. "I would rather we didn't meet. I would rather say good-by now. You understand, don't you? Remember me a little as I am to-day."

"I shall always remember you," she answered.

"And let me remember you as you are. If we chance to meet, why we must. But why should we? We never met till now. If it depends on me I think we never will meet again."

Mrs. Austin looked at him with an expression which was at once startled and thoughtful, and a faint tinge of rose on her pale face made answer to Frank's blush. The entreaty "Let me remember you as you are," touched her strangely. She knew that she was beautiful, but she knew also that her beauty was on the wane, and there was a melancholy pleasure in the thought that, though for the world she might grow old, for this one man she should always remain such as she was at that moment of farewell. She could not marry him, she did not love him, but woman-like she did desire to be always young for her young lover. She desired it too for her own sake. Otherwise it seemed to her that the mere lapse of a few years might turn Frank's passionate devotion and her answering pity into a ridiculous joke. If she were a faded elderly woman and he a heavy respectable squire, would it be possible to remember without laughter that they had ever felt and spoken as they were feeling and speaking then? Why should not Frank have his way, foolish and boyish though it might be?

"Let it be so, then," she said. "If you like it best, we will say 'Good-by' here and now." She looked at him very sadly. "I wish I had never come here."

"No, no!" cried Frank, with sudden passion, almost as if he thought that her wish could really take her sweet unapproachable presence out of his memory. "No; I can part with you—I must part with you—but I couldn't part with the time I have had."

"I feel as if I had done nothing but harm, and yet I can't help it," she went on, half to herself.

"How have you done any harm?" Frank demanded. "Because I love you, and you won't have me? Do you think"—this with an uncertain laugh—"that I shall take to drinking, perhaps—go to the dogs? After loving you?"

"No, I don't think that; but I'm sorry you should have wasted your love on me."

"It isn't wasted," said Frank, after a pause, gazing intently at the floor. "Look here, Mrs. Austin, I shall never, as long as I live, love any woman as I love you now. It can't be. One must have one best love of all in one's life, and I've given mine to you. But it isn't wasted, for all that. If ever I marry, and you hear of it, you'll know that my love was better worth having than it could have been if I had never seen you. That isn't being wasted, is it? And you have done good instead of harm—no harm at all."

He looked up quickly, and saw that her eyes were full of tears. "I think she will be a happy woman who loves you and whom you love," she said, half turning from him. "And now good-by."

"Stay one moment more," he entreated. "Let me have one last look. Remember, I'm never going to see you again; I want to recollect you as you are now."

She paused with perfect simplicity, and faced him where he stood. He looked at her, turned his eyes away for a moment, and then looked back.

"It's no good," he said. "When I look away I see you as I saw you that first night, when they were playing, and you walked past me and were not thinking of me. I can see you so any moment I like. Or in the boat this afternoon—you were not thinking of me then either. Perhaps afterwards this will come back to me too," said Frank, still gazing at her as if he would learn her face with its far-off compassion by heart. "Well, good-by!" he ended, with something of rough abruptness in his tone. But even as he said it, in the bitter wrench of parting, the sound of his own voice jarred upon him with a sense of unfitness. "Good-by," he repeated, with the gentleness he had learnt from her.

"Good-by," said Mrs. Austin, and held out her hand, white and with a ring sparkling in the evening light.

He clasped it with the tender reverence which that last touch demanded. "I should like you to say 'Good-by, Frank,' just for once, if you would," he entreated.

With a faint smile of assent she said it very sweetly, drew her hand out of his, and went away.

Frank stood where she had left him, at first with feelings too exalted to be conscious of anything but her beautiful sorrowful face, and the sudden blank of her departure. But as his excitement subsided, the grey light, which always finds its way from the outer world into a passionate sorrow, crept into his heart. There is nothing so dreary as the realisation of loss under its commonplace aspect, no longer as a blow, but as a lasting absence of beauty and joy in dull days to come, the foreshadowing of life's inevitable routine at the moment when it is unendurable even to remember that the days of the week will follow each other in their accustomed order. Frank hated Culverdale as he stood gazing out of the window. There were streaks of yellow and sullen red in the cloudy west, and it seemed to him that never since the world began had there been so ugly and cheerless a sunset. The wind was getting up, and there was something inexpressibly mournful in the shivering of the trees; and yet he stood there, looking and listening till the slow striking of a distant clock startled him from his reverie, and reminded him that he had no time to lose.

As he went down he paused for a moment on the stairs to make sure of his calmness, and, looking into the shadowy hall below, he saw the

door of the drawing-room open, and Tiny come out. When she passed, a slim dusky figure, before a grey window, Frank could not have put the thought into words; but it was his turn to feel, as Gilbert South had felt, as if he saw his old life passing away with bowed head and lingering steps. "Tiny!" he called, and came flying down the stairs in his impetuous fashion.

"Yes," she said, and stopped short. She could hardly see his face in the twilight.

"Tiny," said Frank, breathlessly, "I'm going away—I've had a letter. It's only till to-morrow—it's nothing. But I don't think I congratulated you properly just now——"

"Oh yes, Frank, you did," said Tiny, who felt that he must have congratulated her properly, since he had thought enough about it to accuse himself like this.

"No, I didn't, not as I meant to. I hope you'll be very happy, very happy, always."

"Oh yes," said Tiny, promptly, as if her uninterrupted bliss were the simplest matter of course.

"Look here," Frank continued, "this is a sort of good-by, because it won't be the same thing now. You'll have South to think of——"

"Oh, Frank, but I'm not going to forget you!"

"No, no," said Frank; "we've been something like brother and sister, haven't we?" He held her hand tightly in his, and looked at her through the dusk. "I don't think I ever kissed you, Tiny, even when you were little; and after all we are cousins, you know." She put up her face and kissed him silently. The remembrance of all their pleasant days at Culverdale was about them as their lips met—it was like a shadowy little world of meadow and copse and cornfield, garden and river, bounded by the far horizon of childhood. Both were conscious of that dim background, though Tiny's consciousness was only a half sweet, half sad regret in the midst of new-found joy. As for Frank, he felt that if South didn't make Tiny very happy—always—he should like to horsewhip him. And he would do it too! For Tiny must and should be happy, though he couldn't be.

V.

Frank was at Tiny's wedding early in December; but he contrived, on one pretext or another, to be away from Culverdale during the greater part of the winter. He ended his wanderings, and arrived at home, towards the close of March. "Like the swallows," he said, as he took up his position on the rug and surveyed the familiar room. There was a little change in Frank himself; he looked a little keener, a little older, and he had learned to laugh a little, to himself as well as to other people, at things which could not be mended. He stood smiling and interested while his mother poured out her news.

"And I had a letter from Tiny this morning," she said. "The child seems quite absurdly happy."

"It's a good thing for you that she is happy," said Frank. "You are responsible for that marriage, you know."

"How can you say so? I'm sure I had nothing to do with it. I never dreamt of such a thing!"

Frank shook his head. "Oh, you're a terrible match-maker; there's no escaping you. If you miss one you make another. Where is Tiny now?"

"Rome. Would you like to see the letter?"

He took the flimsy sheets, and deciphered Tiny's dashing raptures rather laboriously. It was the same Tiny; yet not quite the same. There were pretty little airs of authority, and turns of expression which showed that Tiny, who had never been very important before, felt herself something of a queen in her new life. There was wonder at novel sights and experiences—he seemed to see her wide brown eyes as he read—and a profound belief in her husband's perfection. Frank folded the letter and gave it back. He perceived that there was no need for him to start off to Rome with a horsewhip to secure Tiny's happiness. It was taken out of his hands altogether.

Having told her news, Mrs. Leicester began to make inquiries. Had Frank seen anything of the Stauntons as he came through town?

He had called there, and afterwards had been asked to dine.

"Well, then, what is this about Mrs. Austin? I had a note from Mrs. Staunton a day or two ago, and she said she thought I should soon hear some news about her that would surprise me. What does she mean?"

Frank looked vaguely in the direction of the piano. "It means that other people can try their hands at match-making as well as you."

"Oh! is she going to be married? I thought perhaps it was a sisterhood or something of that sort. Is she really going to be married?"

"Can't say. People don't always succeed with their matches, you know. But there's a man who admires her very much, it seems, and Mrs. Staunton is always trying to bring them together. It's a nice little amusement for her, I suppose; she doesn't seem to have much else to do, except drink afternoon tea."

"Did you see Mrs. Austin?"

"No," said Frank, still staring into space; "she was out of town."

"And who is this man? What is his name?"

She was informed that his name was Rowland.

"But who is he? Tell me something about him."

"Oh! I don't know. He's a middle-aged man—Fred Staunton pointed him out to me—getting a little grey."

"But you must know more about him than that. What does he do?"

"Breaks stones, I believe," Frank replied.

Mrs. Leicester looked so utterly astounded and aghast that he began to laugh. "Oh, don't be frightened!" he said. "It's all right. It all depends on what you do it with. He breaks 'em with a little hammer, and that's very respectable."

"Oh, you mean that he's something—what do you call it?—something geological?" she exclaimed, and was much relieved.

"That's about it," said Frank. He threw his shoulders back and stretched his long arms. "Upon my word I think I'd sooner do an honest day's work on the roads than go knocking off little chips of stone and writing papers about 'em. But I suppose he likes it."

"Dear me!" Mrs. Leicester mused. "I should really think it would be a very nice thing for Mildred."

"I should leave her to decide that if I were you."

"It must be very lonely for her as she is. I wonder when the wedding will be. Last time we gave her a pair of pink and gold candlesticks—"

"Did you?" said Frank. "Then don't do it again."

"Why, no, of course not. Well, I must think about it."

"If I were you, I'd wait till I knew there was something to think about," said Frank drily, and there was a silence, broken after a time by Mrs. Leicester. "I've got an idea!" she announced.

Frank looked round rather impatiently, expecting to hear of a wedding present. "I've been thinking," said his mother, "wouldn't you like me to ask her to come down again before her marriage? You would—wouldn't you?"

He started. "No!" he said.

"No—really?"

"No," he repeated. "Why should she come? It was all very well for once, when you were match-making, but I don't want to see Mrs. Austin again."

"Really?" said Mrs. Leicester. "Well, you surprise me—there's no making you out, Frank. I knew you didn't like her at first, but at the end of the time I thought you were just a little taken with her—"

Frank's answer was an impatient movement of his shoulders.

"Oh, I was wrong, I suppose," Mrs. Leicester continued, cheerfully, "but it was so. First I thought you didn't like her, and then I didn't know, and then I thought you did."

"Well, you were right once," said Frank.

"Yes; but it was very funny—I really thought you did. I don't mean anything serious, of course, but I thought, now, that if she had been a little younger—Or that you would take a fancy one of these days to somebody younger, but that style, you know."

"Did you?" he answered, with a laugh. "Then you were wrong—quite wrong. I shall marry some time or other, but my wife won't be the least bit like Mrs. Austin."

"Well, then, my dear boy, I'm sure it was very nice of you to be so attentive just because she was your mother's old friend. I hadn't the least idea you disliked her as much as all that."

"Disliked her—rubbish!" said Frank. "You're always going from one extreme to the other." He turned round and stood with his hands in his pockets, and his head bent, staring so absently at the fire that his mother said, smilingly—

"A penny for your thoughts! Come, they must be worth hearing!"

"Oh, I don't know," he began, rather sulkily; but all at once he laughed and looked up. "Here, hand over that penny," he said; "I was wondering how long it took to get over the measles."

Mrs. Leicester was much amused at the absurd idea, and gave him very precise information as to the time which had elapsed in his own case before his recovery was quite complete. "But I don't know that it is the same with everybody," she said.

"No, I dare say not," he replied, a little vaguely. "But I suppose a fellow always does get over them some time or other, doesn't he?"

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